TRACTS FOR THE TIMES: THREE

THE CONGRESS CRISIS

By the same author

THE POLITICS OF NON-ALIGNMENT

THE CONGRESS CRISIS

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Preface

THE crisis in the Indian National Congress which resulted in the break-up of the party into two groups has posed many difficult questions. It is too early either to give satisfying answers or to determine their significance for the future of Indian democracy. History alone will determine the rights and wrongs of the personalities involved in the crisis. But we cannot and need not wait for history to tell the truth. We must make an attempt to understand events, to the best of our ability, even though it might not be possible to get at the whole truth.

It is in this spirit that this study, necessarily a brief one, has been undertaken. I do not lay claims to objectivity or impartiality, though I have tried to judge events on what I consider certain well-accepted principles of Parliamentary Democracy.

This is in no way an "inside" story of the crisis. I am sure that similar studies have been undertaken by others already. I shall be happy if this small study encourages others to undertake more and better studies of the crisis.

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March 3, 1970

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I

How It All Began

THE Indian National Congress had never been a homogeneous or a closely knit political unit. From its very inception, it had attracted people of all shades of opinion, of varying political and economic views, of different ideals and ideologies into its fold. Before independence, all these varying opinions and ideas did not find any chance of coming on the surface on account of two extraordinary factors. The first was the supreme and the all-embracing objective of achieving independence; and the second was the charismatic personality of Gandhiji. After independence, it was Jawaharlal Nehru's tremendous popularity and prestige, as the chosen heir of the Father of the Nation, that kept the Congress Party together. Even then, it is difficult to assert that Nehru was ever the complete master of the organisation even after the death of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, the only rival to Nehru's authority in the Congress. Nehru appears to have paid a very heavy price for the support given to him by the Congress Party. He had allowed maximum freedom to the State units, with the result that the Congress became a haven for power-hungry, unscrupulous, greedy, and incompetent politicians who never had any commitment either to the principles and policies of the Congress Party, or to the welfare of the people. Nehru had also to bow to regionalism by dividing the country into linguistic States, and that, too, in the form of concessions to mass violence and agitations.

As a result, the Congress Party never developed a clear cut ideological orientation. That is to say, the Congress could

never define in clear terms the meaning and content of concepts like democratic socialism and secularism, and so on, which became its basic principles and objectives. So much so that the party had become a sort of omnibus in which socialists and capitalists, secularists and communalists, democrats and communists and even some fascists kept themselves check by jowl. They were all lured by power and position.

While this state of affairs continued, certain new trends and forces emerged in the party, soon after the death of Nehru. The most important of these new trends was the emergence of new areas of power within the party itself. Two of these areas were dominated by Mr. Morarji Desai and Mrs. Indira Gandhi though both remained in the background for some time. It was the third area that increased in size and shape immediately after the death of Nehru. This was a group of State party bosses who came to New Delhi during the last years of Nehru's life under his patronage. None of these bosses had any sizable following at the Centre, though they had considerable power at the State levels. Nevertheless they formed a formidable group and were in a position to influence the party politics. This group consisted of Messrs. K. Kamaraj of Tamil Nadu, S.K. Patil of Bombay, N. Sanjiva Reddy of Andhra Pradesh, S. Nijalingappa of Mysore and a few others. Mr. K. Kamaraj had become the presiding genius of this group by virtue of his headship of the Congress Party at the time of Nehru's death. It was he who was responsible for putting up Lal Bahadur Shastri as successor to Nehru in order to keep their influence at the Centre predominant.

From all accounts it is evident that once in power, Shastri did not like to be the mere figurehead of a Prime Minister carrying out the instructions of the party bosses. So he began to assert his position, slowly but surely. He would have perhaps challenged the party bosses had he not died a

premature death very soon after the India-Pakistan war in 1965.

But his sudden and tragic demise gave the party bosses yet another opportunity to play their game. And they supported Mrs. Indira Gandhi, as against Mr. Morarji Desai, for the Prime Ministership, under the belief that she was likely to be more responsive to their wishes than Mr. Morarji Desai who is known for his dogmatism in politics. In this game of king-making, the party bosses appear to have overlooked certain factors of importance. The first was Mrs. Indira Gandhi's immense personal prestige in the rank and file of the Congress organisation, which she could use to have her way against anyone else in the Congress hierarchy. It should be admitted that she has been in the centre of Congress politics longer than many of her opponents. She is the only person who had the opportunity of knowing the innermost thoughts and feelings of Nehru about the affairs of the nation in general, and, those of the Congress Party in particular. And Nehru himself had groomed her for the post of Prime Minister, in an unobtrusive way, without giving the impression to any one, except perhaps a few who were very close to him or to those who had the capacity to see things clearly.

It was, therefore, clear when Mrs. Gandhi was elected leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party that sooner or later she would assert her legitimate position and authority as the Prime Minister, if not also as the leader of the party. For, the position created by the party bosses was not only unacceptable to Mrs. Indira Gandhi, personally, but it was also untenable politically. In a parliamentary form of government the Prime Minister, who is the leader of the majority party in Parliament, is also the leader of that party outside the legislature. This was the case throughout Nehru's life, for though there was a Congress President and the High

Command, Nehru's authority either in the party or in the legislature was unchallenged. If any Congress President had really challenged Nehru, probably he would have changed the party organisation suitably to bring it in line with the practice in England.

It would be seen that it was the unwillingness of the Congress High Command to concede this primacy to the Prime Minister in legislative and party affairs that had precipitated the crisis in the Congress Party resulting in the division of the party. But, as the crisis deepened, it developed more and more into an ideological cleavage between the right and left wings of the Congress Party. It is on these lines that the Congress has finally split into two, though there are notable exceptions on both sides, as we shall see in the end.

The beginning of the split was seen at Bangalore when the Congress Party gathered there for the All-India Congress Committee meeting, which began on July 10, 1969. Mrs. Indira Gandhi could not come to Bangalore for the opening session of the All-India Congress Committee due to her indisposition. But it soon became known that she had sent a "note"[1] to the Congress Working Committee on economic policy, suggesting, *inter alia*, the immediate nationalisation of big banks. This note appears to have come as a surprise to the party leaders assembled at Bangalore. For, the Prime Minister had hitherto kept herself above the ideological battles raging in the party between the right and the left groups. By proposing the nationalisation of the top five or six banks and land reforms, etc., she had more or less identified herself with the left wing on economic issues, thus perhaps incurring the wrath of the right wing of the party. Among the latter were Mr. Nijalingappa, the Congress President, Mr. Morarji Desai, Deputy Prime Minister and

[1] See Appendix I.

Finance Minister, and Mr. S.K. Patil, MP. These leaders have been opposed to bank nationalisation and other economic measures which were included in the Prime Minister's note. And they did not hide their discomfiture at the Prime Minister's proposals. Mr. Morarji Desai was reported to have said that bank nationalisation could be thought of only after giving a fair trial to the policy of social control of banks, which he said was proving successful and that he would not be responsible for the nationalisation of banks, if the party finally decided to nationalise the banks.[2] According to Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad, Mr. Desai had said: "As long as I am Finance Minister this cannot be implemented. If the Prime Minister wants to do it, she will have to change her Finance Minister."[3]

The Prime Minister, on the other hand, had made it clear that the time had come for such a step. Mr. K. Kamaraj and Mr. Y. B. Chavan, besides Mr. Jagjivan Ram and Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad, were in favour of bank nationalisation, sooner than later. Among the other supporters of bank nationalisation were Mr. Swaran Singh, Mr. D. Sanjivayya, and Mr. C. Subramaniam.

The Working Committee was thus clearly divided on economic policy. Had either side adopted an uncompromising attitude, perhaps the party would have faced a major crisis of division on ideological lines. But this did not happen, as each side appeared to show enough will for compromise which was brought about by a compromise draft prepared by the Union Home Minister, Mr. Y. B. Chavan. This was adopted unanimously by the Working Committee on July 11, 1969, and, by the All-India Congress Committee on July 12, 1969. Mr. Morarji Desai moved the resolution in the All-India Congress Committee meeting and Mr. Y. B. Chavan seconded it.

[2] *The Hindu*, July 12, 1969.

[3] *Ibid*, September 14, 1969.

The resolution said, *inter alia*: "The All-India Congress Committee welcomes the note of the Prime Minister and calls upon the Central and State Governments to take necessary steps expeditiously to implement the various points mentioned in the note."[4]

What this resolution appears to have achieved was not so much a compromise, as a transfer of the conflict from the Working Committee and the All-India Congress Committee to the Central and State Governments. For, while it had given enough authority to the governments to implement the points mentioned in the Prime Minister's note, it had also left room for its opponents to fight out the issue in the respective governments. It had thus given the direction for the future course of collision between the two sides. But it was hailed as a real compromise and one more proof of the dynamism and resilience of the Congress Party.

That it was not so became all too evident in the other momentous decision taken by the Congress Party at Bangalore, over the party's candidate for the Union Presidency. The Congress Parliamentary Board of 8 members decided by a snap vote of 5 to 2 to nominate Mr. N. Sanjiva Reddy, the then Speaker of Lok Sabha, as the Presidential candidate against Mr. Jagjivan Ram, proposed by Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The only other member to vote with the Prime Minister was Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad, the Minister for Industrial Development. The candidature of Mr. Reddy was supported by Mr. S. Nijalingappa, Mr. Morarji Desai, Mr. Y. B. Chavan, Mr. K. Kamaraj and Mr. S. K. Patil. Mr. Jagjivan Ram, the 8th member of the Board, did not vote as he was a candidate.

It is evident from Press reports and the Prime Minister's own account given at her Press conference on July 13,

4 *The Hindu*, July 13, 1969.

1969, that she had proposed the name of Mr. V. V. Giri, then acting President, before that of Mr. Jagjivan Ram.[5] Neither name was acceptable to the party bosses, who it was reported, had decided at Delhi itself to nominate Mr. Reddy, irrespective of what the Prime Minister said or did. There was, therefore, not even an attempt at a compromise as in the Working Committee over economic policy. The party leaders brushed aside unceremoniously the proposals of the Prime Minister and proceeded to nominate their candidate.

The Prime Minister expressed distress at the manner in which the decision was taken, though she did not say anything against Mr. Reddy personally, as both Mr. Nijalingappa and the Prime Minister herself later told the Press. The Prime Minister revealed at her Press conference on July 13, 1969, that she was working along a principle, the principle of obtaining a national consensus on the choice of the Presidential candidate. She said that the consensus was in favour of Mr. V.V. Giri. She had proposed Mr. Jagjivan Ram as a compromise candidate, as many had suggested his name as a gesture to the Harijans during the Gandhi Centenary Year.

The Prime Minister appears to have been justified in her contention that the consensus was in favour of Mr. Giri, as the events since have proved. For, not only did a majority of the Opposition parties and legislators vote in favour of Mr. Giri, but even those who did not vote in favour of him, appear to have done so, not so much because they did not like him, but because he did not seek their support while announcing his candidature for the Presidential election as an independent candidate. Even the leader of the Swatantra Party, Mr. N. G. Ranga, had congratulated Mr. Giri on his decision, though his party did not support his candidature,

[5] *The Hindu*, July 14, 1969.

ture, in deference to the wishes of other parties like the Praja Socialist Party and Bharatiya Kranti Dal. Only the Jana Sangh appears to have been totally against Mr. Giri and it was the only party that favoured Mr. Reddy against Mr. Giri from the beginning.

It would thus appear that had the Congress Party nominated Mr. V.V. Giri perhaps he would have been acceptable to all those political parties and legislators who had supported his candidature subsequently in spite of his decision to contest as an independent candidate. Of course, some Opposition parties like the B.K.D. and the P.S.P. would have opposed Mr. V.V. Giri, if he were nominated by the Congress, as these parties had opposed him even as an independent candidate, on the ground that he was as much a Congressman as Mr. Reddy was. Indeed, the Jana Sangh itself did not automatically support Mr. Reddy as the Congress candidate, though there is no doubt that it would have proposed him, if he were not nominated by the Congress Parliamentary Board. In fact, the Jana Sangh appears to have been among the first to suggest the name of Mr. Reddy, as a possible candidate for the Presidency.

However, neither Mr. Nijalingappa nor any other member of the Congress Parliamentary Board has explained the reasons for their rejection of the Prime Minister's view that Mr. V.V. Giri had the support of a majority of the Opposition leaders, and members of Parliament. Did they think it was not necessary for the Congress to depend upon the Opposition parties and their support? More importantly, neither at the time of announcing the Board's decision to nominate Mr. Reddy, nor at any time subsequently, have the party leaders explained the reasons for overlooking the claims of Mr. V.V. Giri, then acting President, who is a veteran Congressman with a long record of public service and a man of integrity and sincerity. It cannot be denied

that he had at least a nominal claim for the Congress nomination, according to the convention developed since independence, *of elevating the Vice-President as President. It is*, therefore, difficult to understand the special reasons for their fascination for Mr. Reddy, except that he was a person belonging to their group.

They do not also appear to have taken Mr. Giri into confidence at least on grounds of courtesy, if not as a senior and trusted Congressman. And they were thoroughly unprepared either for his decision to contest the election as an independent candidate, or, for his bitter denunciation of the Board's decision.[6] On the other hand, they seem to have believed, obviously wrongly, that as a trusted Congressman he would not oppose their decision, though there was no reason why he should have done so, after the discourtesy shown to him by them.

This, certainly, appears to have been their calculation about Mrs. Gandhi, as is evident from an answer given by Mr. Nijalingappa to a question whether he was confident that she would work for the election of Mr. Reddy. The Congress President was reported to have lost his temper and said: "What sort of question are you asking about some one who has been life-long in the Congress and belongs to a family that has been associated with the Congress from her grandfather's time?"[7] Probably the Congress Party would not have been divided today, if Mr. Nijalingappa and his associates had remembered this, and also the fact that the person concerned was the Prime Minister, and, one of the foremost leaders of the party, before outvoting her in the Board, and, on other critical occasions in their subsequent confrontation with her.

[6] See Appendix II.
[7] *n*. 5.

It is also questionable whether it was appropriate for the Congress leaders to drag the office and the person of the Speaker of Lok Sabha into politics by nominating Mr. Reddy as their Presidential candidate. It is true that a person occupying the post of Speaker may possess all the qualities required in a Presidential candidate. But the principle involved is that the Speaker of Lok Sabha could, and should not, look forward to the office of the President of India, it being a political office. If this were possible, then an ambitious person occupying the post might use his office to gain the favour of the ruling party or the Opposition parties in order to achieve his ambition. Such a person could neither be an effective Speaker nor would he make an ideal President. So is the case with the Chief Justice of India. To drag these eminences into the Presidential elections appears to be against the spirit, if not the letter, of the Constitution of India as well as the principles of parliamentary democracy. Mr. Hiren Mukherjee, MP, was, therefore, right when he said that the Speaker should have kept himself away from politics by virtue of his decision and commitments as Speaker, and, that his selection was a blow to parliamentary democracy.[8]

Finally, the Congress Parliamentary Board's decision was bitterly denounced by all Opposition parties, including the Jana Sangh, which had earlier toyed with the idea of proposing Mr. Reddy as its candidate. In the face of the split in the Board between the Prime Minister and the party leaders, it would have been far better to try for a consensus within the party, as well as with the other political parties, on the three names suggested at the Board's meeting.

Thus from every point of view the choice of Mr. Reddy as the Congress candidate for the Presidency appears to have been one of the most unfortunate decisions taken by

[8] *n.* 4.

the Congress Parliamentary Board in its long history. For, it put the Congress Party in a quandary and precipitated a crisis which has been brewing over a long time. That the Congress leaders could have taken such a momentous decision in a light-hearted fashion is, therefore, unthinkable. They appear to have taken it quite deliberately, and with a definite plan, though it is difficult to ascertain with precision what that plan was.

That there was a plan was also evident from the fact that the party leaders had decided even at Delhi about the nomination of Mr. Reddy. It was also reported that the party leaders had again met at Bangalore to declare their solidarity over the Presidential candidate, without prejudice to their views on economic policy,[9] over which they were sharply divided, as has already been seen. It will not perhaps be out of place to mention that this was extraordinary behaviour, considering the fact that the Congress Parliamentary Board was scheduled to meet within less than 48 hours to decide the issue.

This decision could not, therefore, have been a reaction against the Prime Minister's note on economic policy. On the other hand, it seemed to indicate that the compromise over economic policy was only a tactical move on the part of the party leaders, while the real challenge to the authority of the Prime Minister in the Government and the party lay in the Board's decision.

For, whatever might have been the real plans of the party bosses, one thing was clear beyond doubt; that the Board's decision was a calculated attempt to humiliate the Prime Minister personally, and a challenge to her prestige and authority. It was interpreted as such by the Press and politicians as well as the general public. The Jana Sangh leader, Mr. Kanwar Lal Gupta, MP, went to the extent of

[9] *The Hindu*, July 11, 1969.

saying that the Board's rejection of the Prime Minister's candidate meant no confidence in her and that she must resign.[10]

It was possible that the party bosses themselves expected that the Prime Minister might resign or take some hasty step which could bring her downfall. Or they might have calculated that in this way they could make Mrs. Gandhi more responsive to their wishes and demands in policy matters as well as the composition of the Cabinet and other important matters.

It was, in fact, reported that the Prime Minister was informed by two of her colleagues during her visit to Japan that the party leaders had decided to nominate Mr. Reddy as the Presidential candidate in order to topple her government.[11] Mrs. Gandhi was also reported to have said after the Bangalore episode that she had come to know of an impending no-confidence move against her. Mr. S.K. Patil had said after hearing of Mrs. Gandhi's decision to relieve Mr. Desai of his Finance portfolio that she should seek the confidence of the Parliamentary Party afresh.[12]

Whatever might have been the calculations of the Congress leaders, it is clear that the position created by the Board's decision might have been intolerable for the Prime Minister personally, and was untenable politically. It does not, therefore, seem proper to compare this decision with the Board's nomination of Dr. Rajendra Prasad for a second term in the face of Nehru's opposition. Nehru might have been opposed to give a second term to Dr. Prasad. Probably he was anxious to establish a convention in this regard. There was no question of any challenge to either Nehru's primacy in the party or authority in the government. More-

10 *The Hindu*, July 11, 1969.

11 See G. K. Reddy's Letter, *Ibid*, September 2, 1969.

12 *Ibid*, July 17, 1969.

over, Dr. Prasad was a stalwart of the Congress and nobody could have seriously opposed his candidature even for the second term.

Mr. Reddy, on the other hand, was not the best candidate that the Congress Party could think of for the Presidentship. And his nomination, as we have seen above, was not a well considered one. Even if it did not antagonise the Prime Minister, still the Congress Party would have faced the problem of coping with Mr. Giri's decision to contest the election as an independent candidate, with the prospect of many Congressmen voting for him.

But when the Prime Minister was in favour of other candidates, the party leaders should have accepted a compromise as was done over economic policy. After all, Mr. Chavan, who had voted in favour of Mr. Reddy in the Board, has since admitted that the decision was a mistake, though he has not given the reasons for it.[13] It is still a mystery why he did not try for a compromise between the Prime Minister and other party leaders,[14] as he did in the Working Committee over the economic policy resolution. Though it is difficult to say whether he would have succeeded in the attempt, unless he could wean at least one more member to his side from the Prime Minister's opponents, who had a clear majority in the Board, an attempt would not have cost anything to him. On the other hand, he would have enhanced his own prestige as a statesman and politician, and probably would have been in a better position to act in a similar capacity between the two sides subsequently. This might have, in all probability, bettered the chances for his personal gain, if he had any such calculations in mind. It is, indeed, difficult to believe that a politician of

[13] *The Hindu*, September 19, 1969.

[14] According to Mr. C. Subramaniam, Mr. Chavan failed to get a decision postponed at Bangalore. *Ibid* September 18, 1969.

his calibre could or should have been unaware of the struggle or struggles within the party and the possibilities that these offered for personal gain. It is possible that he might have either overestimated the capacity of the Prime Minister's opponents or underestimated the former's capacity to strike back at the latter and also their supporters. It is still to his credit that he soon regained his sense of reality and quickly retraceed his steps, by realising his mistake.

It is difficult to say whether the party leaders would have accepted a compromise candidate, if they had foreseen the possibility of Mr. Giri contesting the election, either as an independent or an Opposition candidate. For, they would have then realised that the Prime Minister's support was essential for the success of the Congress candidate. If they did not think so, evidently they were mistaken. The truth appears to be that they decided to present the Prime Minister with a *fait accompli*, leaving it to her to face the consequences of either accepting it, or, of opposing it.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the Prime Minister's immediate reaction was to tell the Board that she would have "to think of all the consequences", as she revealed at her Press conference on July 13, 1969, denying the report that she had threatened the Board with "serious consequences". The Prime Minister was very much distressed at the manner in which the decision was taken. The fact that two of her senior Cabinet colleagues had voted against her appears to have come as a surprise to her, for it seemed to tilt the balance decisively against her within the party. Probably, Mr. Chavan's vote was taken as a decisive factor and a signal for the future. It was in these circumstances that she appears to have decided to deal some quick blows against her opponents to create confusion in their ranks, as well as to strengthen her position both in the party and among the masses.

Even at this stage Mr. Chavan could have intervened and tried for a compromise by trying to persuade Mr. Reddy to withdraw from the contest. But he did not do it. And the party leaders appeared to be opposed for such a move, even after Mr. Giri announced his candidature. Mr. Nijalingappa said that he stood by the Board's decision and that nobody could oppose the Congress candidate. He was also reported to have made it known that he would take disciplinary action against any one who worked against the party candidate.

There was, therefore, no point in accusing the Prime Minister for not appealing to the Board for a reconsideration of its decision as Mrs. Tarakeshwari Sinha did, in a provocative statement,[15] which was uncalled for. Mrs. Sinha's accusation that Mrs. Gandhi objected to Mr. Reddy's nomination was not correct, as the Prime Minister had only taken objection to the manner in which the decision was taken, and expressed her distress over it. She had also not defied the Board's decision. She had only withheld her acceptance from it, as it was aimed against her personally. Speaking about Mr. Reddy, Mrs. Sinha has also said that "anything that renders him unfit for the Presidency renders him unfit for the Speakership". We have already pointed out that the Speaker should not be eligible for the Presidency in the interests of parliamentary democracy. On the other hand, the Prime Minister's displeasure at the Congress parliamentary Board's decision could not be called a blow to Parliamentary democracy, as the Congress Party could not be identified with either Government or Parliament.

We think, therefore, that it would have been an act of wisdom and courage, and in keeping with the dignity of the august offices of the Speaker of Lok Sabha, which he occu-

[15] *The Hindu*, July, 15, 1969.

pied then, and of the President of India, to which position he aspired, if Mr. Reddy had declined the nomination. Besides it was known to Mr. Reddy that it was not an unanimous decision of the Congress Parliamentary Board, and, that the Prime Minister did not like the decision. Or, he should have at least tried for a compromise between the Prime Minister and the party leaders before accepting the nomination. This he could have easily done by making a compromise between the Prime Minister and the party leaders, a condition precedent for his acceptance of the Board's nomination.

As the Press reports indicate, Mr. Reddy appeared to be in a hurry to announce his acceptance of the nomination. In his anxiety he appears to have either overlooked the deeper issues involved in the Board's decision, or to have just neglected those issues. He might have also calculated that he could win the election even without the support of the Prime Minister and her supporters, or even against their active opposition.

It was perhaps in this belief that he issued a statement addressed to the Opposition parties stating that in spite of the Congress nomination, he was a non-party candidate, and assured them that he would function as such, if he were elected President.[16] And this, in spite of the fact that all the Opposition parties, including the Jana Sangh, had denounced the Congress decision and refused to support him. Such behaviour from the Presidential candidate sponsored by the ruling party was strange, to say the least. And if canvassing was necessary, Mr. Reddy could have perhaps left it to his party leaders, instead of indulging in it himself.

It would thus appear that Mr. Reddy had placed his personal considerations above those of the Congress Party,

16 *The Hindu*, July 19, 1969.

that the Prime Minister chose to act, as she knew that the party leaders were not united on economic issues. Thus, soon after returning to New Delhi, the Prime Minister appeared to have decided to nationalise banks in order to give an ideological turn to the struggle for political supremacy between her and the party bosses. In fact, this appears to have been the main reason for her somewhat sudden decision to support the left wing demand for nationalisation of banks and other radical economic measures in her "note" to the All-India Congress Committee. This does not mean that the measures suggested in her "note" were not desirable in themselves or that the Prime Minister was not serious about them. But it is possible that she might not have chosen the Bangalore session for this shift in her stance, if the party bosses had not posed a threat to her authority over the Presidential nomination. Thus it would appear that the Prime Minister wanted to put the party bosses on notice that she would create an ideological split in the party and carry the struggle to the masses, if they did not concede her a position of supremacy at least in the government, if not also in the party. That the party bosses did not have the strength to oppose her on the ideological front was evident from their acceptance of her proposals through a compromise resolution, and that the Prime Minister was not in a hurry was also evident from her acceptance of the compromise formula over her proposals.

It would appear that the party leaders had not fully appreciated the motives behind the Prime Minister's move. Or perhaps they underestimated her capacity to carry the threat into action, and, therefore, made the clever move for a compromise over the issue without, however, making any concession over the Presidential nomination. She had, therefore, no ot[illegible] [illegible]ice except to strike them back if she wanted t[illegible] re[illegible] [illegible]uthority in the government and the

2
The Nationalisation of Banks

IT was clear from the Prime Minister's remarks at Bangalore that she was not going to accept the humiliation at the hands of the party leaders over the Presidential nomination. Even as the party leaders were departing from Bangalore to their respective destinations, they received news of Mr. Giri's bitter denunciation of the Board's decision and his decision to contest the election as an independent candidate. Though the party leaders expressed surprise over this, they did not take it very seriously. Probably they were encouraged by the fact that Mr. Giri's decision had surprised even the Opposition parties, who were equally divided over the choice of a candidate. The one chance offered by Mr. Giri to defeat the Congress candidate has been wasted by the Opposition parties in their bitter antagonisms, making a mockery of the parliamentary Opposition. The Congress leaders appeared to be preoccupied with the Prime Minister's challenge which she was expected to throw at any moment. But the manner in which they reacted to the concerted and well-calculated moves made by the Prime Minister against them reveals that they were ill-prepared for the blows, after having provoked her at Bangalore. Not only that; they also failed to anticipate correctly the direction in which she was likely to attack them.

It has been suggested already that the compromise formula adopted at Bangalore over economic policy set the direction for the future course of collision between the Prime Minister and the party leaders. And it was along this line

that the Prime Minister chose to act, as she knew that the party leaders were not united on economic issues. Thus, soon after returning to New Delhi, the Prime Minister appeared to have decided to nationalise banks in order to give an ideological turn to the struggle for political supremacy between her and the party bosses. In fact, this appears to have been the main reason for her somewhat sudden decision to support the left wing demand for nationalisation of banks and other radical economic measures in her "note" to the All-India Congress Committee. This does not mean that the measures suggested in her "note" were not desirable in themselves or that the Prime Minister was not serious about them. But it is possible that she might not have chosen the Bangalore session for this shift in her stance, if the party bosses had not posed a threat to her authority over the Presidential nomination. Thus it would appear that the Prime Minister wanted to put the party bosses on notice that she would create an ideological split in the party and carry the struggle to the masses, if they did not concede her a position of supremacy at least in the government, if not also in the party. That the party bosses did not have the strength to oppose her on the ideological front was evident from their acceptance of her proposals through a compromise resolution, and that the Prime Minister was not in a hurry was also evident from her acceptance of the compromise formula over her proposals.

It would appear that the party leaders had not fully appreciated the motives behind the Prime Minister's move. Or perhaps they underestimated her capacity to carry the threat into action, and, therefore, made the clever move for a compromise over the issue without, however, making any concession over the Presidential nomination. She had, therefore, no other choice except to strike them back if she wanted to retain her authority in the government and the

party. If she had not done so, the party bosses would have proceeded to bring greater pressure on her to concede to their immediate demand for a reconstitution of the Cabinet to give representation to some of their own men and women, as is evident from reports in the Press.

So, the Prime Minister decided to strike back at her opponents by deciding to nationalise banks. The first hint of her decision was given by her swift action in relieving Mr. Desai of the Finance portfolio and taking it over herself. It is evident from her letters[1] to Mr. Desai and her statements to partymen and the Press that she wanted to take the full responsibility and full credit for the nationalisation of banks. This is what she appears to have meant when she said that she did not want to burden Mr. Desai with the implementation of the economic policy over which he had earlier differed from her. The stress laid by her repeatedly on the fact that the economic policy resolution of the All-India Congress Committee was based on her "note", and that she was therefore assuming responsibility for its implementation, also convey the same meaning.

It was natural that she wanted to take full credit for the policy inasmuch as it was her major weapon in the war against the party leaders and Mr. Desai himself. She could not have, therefore, allowed him to take the credit for the implementation of the policy, even if he had no reservations in the matter. But Mr. Desai was not for it at least for two years.[2]

There is no doubt that the manner in which the decision was taken by the Prime Minister was quite unusual and have hurt Mr. Desai's feelings. He made it clear while offering his resignation in protest against the Prime Minister's

[1] See Appendix III.

[2] See *The Hindu*, September 8, 1969.

action.[3] It would seem that the Prime Minister did not trust Mr. Desai any more after his action in the Parliamentary Board over the Presidential nomination. She might not have just cared for Mr. Desai's feelings as he and others had not cared for her's when they brushed aside her proposals for the Presidential nomination in the Parliamentary Board. In fact, there was, a striking similarity between the Prime Minister's reaction to the Board's decision and Mr. Desai's reaction to the Prime Minister's action. Both had objected to the *manner* in which the decisions were taken. It is, therefore, possible to say that the whole trouble might not have arisen had Mr. Desai and others tried to place themselves in the place of the Prime Minister before humiliating her in the Parliamentary Board.

However, the Prime Minister appears to have been prompted by the need for speed and secrecy in the actions proposed by her. She wanted to push through the Ordinance taking over banks before the acting President filed his nomination papers for the Presidential election. This required speed and determination. It is doubtful if Mr. Desai would have acted in the manner she did had he been in charge of Finance portfolio.

It was once again the need for speed and secrecy that appears to have prompted the Prime Minister to push through the Ordinance barely 48 hours before Parliament was scheduled to meet. It seems unrealistic to criticise the government or the Prime Minister for the Ordinance, for, it is the normal procedure adopted in measures of this nature everywhere in order to prevent speculation, etc. Mr. Desai himself was in favour of the Ordinance.[4] This is evident from the fact that the Ordinance is reported to have been a revised version of the one prepared and kept

[3] See Appendix III, also *The Hindu*, July 19, 1969.

[4] *The Hindu*, September 8, 1969.

ready during Mr. T.T. Krishnamachari's period in the early 1960's when the measure was first contemplated. The fact that Parliament was about to meet within 48 hours appears to be a coincidence and, as such, the Ordinance does not appear to be derogatory to Parliament since it has now been approved by Parliament. Whether it was constitutional or not is not for us to say.

It is significant that none in the Cabinet, and no one else in the Congress Party, had anything to say against the Ordinance issued by the President nationalising as many as 14 major banks. On the other hand, each one of them hailed the Ordinance as a major achievement. Not even Mr. Patil had said anything against it. Surely, if the Ordinance was not against parliamentary democracy, it is difficult to see how the Prime Minister's action in relieving Mr. Desai of his portfolio, in order to facilitate the promulgation of the Ordinance could be called against parliamentary democracy, as Mr. Desai[5] and his supporters claimed.

In the circumstances, it would have been really difficult for the Prime Minister to restore the Finance portfolio to Mr. Desai, as she was reported to have told Mr. Nijalingappa, Mr. Chavan, and Mr. Kamaraj, who had all tried to persuade her to restore the *status quo ante*.[6] The decision to relieve Mr. Desai of his portfolio does not seem to have been aimed against him, as the Prime Minister did not dismiss him from the Cabinet and had offered him any other portfolio and requested him to continue as Deputy Prime Minister. Her letters to Mr. Desai indicate that she had gone out of her way to convince Mr. Desai of the propriety of her action. She had accepted Mr. Chavan's plea not to accept his resignation immediately and to meet him

[5] *The Hindu*, July 22, 1969. So it does not seem correct to say that it was to cover up his exit that bank nationalisation was done. See *n.* 2.

[6] *Ibid*, July 18 and 19, 1969.

to discuss the affair. She had written to him to reconsider his resignation. There was no reason why she should have done all this if she had really wanted to humiliate Mr. Desai and push him out of the Cabinet.

Suppose the Prime Minister's action was aimed against Mr. Desai personally, it is difficult to see how the Prime Minister could have retraced her steps consistent with her self-respect, if not for other important political considerations. Moreover, it would have been difficult for her to accept the advice of the very same persons who had tried to humiliate her at Bangalore. Thus, even if the party leaders had failed to understand the real purpose of the Prime Minister's decision to relieve Mr. Desai of his portfolio, prior to the nationalisation of banks, there should have been no doubt about it after nationalisation and it should have been accepted by all of them with good grace. But, unfortunately the party leaders appear to have taken an entirely one sided view of the whole situation. The significance of the Prime Minister's acceptance of the decision of the Congress Parliamentary Board to nominate Mr. Reddy as the party's Presidential candidate which she announced soon after her decision to relieve Mr. Desai of his portfolio, and her letter to the Congress President, Mr. Nijalingappa, stating that she regarded the controversy as "closed"[7] also appears to have been missed by the party leaders. For, it meant that the Prime Minister was looking ahead rather than behind. She appeared to tell the party leaders that if they had a right to do what they pleased in the Parliamentary Board, she also had a right to do what she pleased in the government, as long as she remained the Prime Minister. She also appeared to tell that she was prepared for a reconciliation with them on these terms.

7 *The Hindu*, July 17, 1969.

Only Mr. Chavan seems to have understood the situation properly as is clear from the shift in his attitude towards the crisis. After the nationalisation of banks, which he approved wholeheartedly, he did not any more press for the restoration of the Finance Ministry to Mr. Desai. Nor did he offer to resign from the Cabinet as a protest, as many had expected. Though it took some more time for him to establish his bona fides with the Prime Minister, it can be safely concluded that he was no more with the other party leaders who chose to keep the Desai issue alive, without either accepting a compromise or putting pressure upon the Prime Minister for taking him back into the Cabinet as Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister. If the party leaders wanted a reconciliation with the Prime Minister, they could have advised Mr. Desai to join the Cabinet as Deputy Prime Minister in the first instance without pressing for the restoration of the Finance Ministry to him. The Prime Minister appeared to be willing to take him back into the Cabinet as Deputy Prime Minister, even after abolishing the post of Deputy Prime Ministership after Mr. Desai's resignation, if he did not insist on the restoration of the Finance Ministry to him. If this were unacceptable to Mr. Desai on grounds of self-respect, then some other arrangement could have been made consistent with his self-respect. Perhaps he could have been nominated for the Vice-Presidentship or as the Speaker of Lok Sabha.

Indeed, in her letters to Mr. Desai, the Prime Minister appears to have tried to impress upon Mr. Desai the fact that she had no personal quarrel with him, even after his joining hands with the other party leaders over the Presidential nomination and that she would be happy to keep him in the Cabinet as Deputy Prime Minister with another important portfolio, if only he were prepared to accept it. Though she had deprived him of his portfolio rather unceremoniously,

she appears to have tried her best to convince him that it was not her intention to hurt him, and she even apologised to him for it.[8]

In the circumstances, would it not have been far better for Mr. Desai to accept the Prime Minister's offer and cooperate with her in the implementation of the party's economic policies? He could have looked to the restoration of the Finance portfolio after the crisis was solved. In this way he would have saved the Congress from disaster. But Mr. Desai chose to depend upon the party leaders who, in fact, were in a way responsible for depriving him the Prime Ministership not once but twice. It is difficult to say whether he felt that they would not deprive it a third time, if he cooperated with them in bringing the Prime Minister's downfall. Mr. Desai should not have failed to see that the game of the party leaders was neither in the interests of parliamentary democracy, nor, indeed, in the interests of the party and the country.

The same could be said about Mr. Sanjiva Reddy. The Prime Minister's acceptance of his nomination and her filing his nomination papers should have made it clear to him that she had nothing against him. And he should have realised at least at this late hour that his success in the Presidential election depended upon her cooperation which was impossible if the party remained divided. He should have, therefore, tried to work for unity in the party if necessary by withdrawing from the contest, as some people had advised him to do. If he had done so, he could have even been nominated for the Vice-Presidentship and he could have looked forward to the Presidency in the next election.

If any objection were raised to this line of argument, then we would only point to the fact that the party leaders themselves had accepted a compromise, after the failure of

[8] *The Hindu*, July 21, 1969.

their candidate in the Presidential election though it is not clear what the gains for Mr. Desai and Mr. Reddy were from this except some vague promises. It would have been much better to accept this before the election, when the party would have been saved and along with it the Presidential candidate and every body else. It is, therefore, the party bosses that have to be blamed for the defeat of Mr. Reddy rather than the Prime Minister. In view of this Mr. Reddy's complaint against the Prime Minister that she had herself first suggested his name, seems to us a cry over split milk. The Prime Minister had not said anything against him at any stage. She was only concerned with the attitude of the other leaders. Therefore, one cannot but regret the fact that Mr. Reddy did not try for a reconciliation between the Prime Minister and the party bosses. On the other hand, he and his supporters appear to have calculated that they could threaten the Prime Minister and her supporters with disciplinary action if they did not vote in favour of the party candidate. And worse still, they appear to have calculated that they could offset the defections, if any, by seeking the second preference votes of the Jana Sangh and Swatantra Party in favour of Mr. Reddy, which the two parties were only too glad to pledge for him. By this action they played themselves straight into the hands of their opponents who might have been waiting for just such an opportunity to demand a free vote in the Presidential vote, in view of the fact that the party leaders had not accepted the need for reconciliation with them. We shall now turn to this phase of the crisis.

3
Electing A President

THE crisis over the Presidential election began with the announcement by the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party that they would give their second preference votes to Mr. Reddy. This decision of the two parties was the direct result of the talks between them and the Congress President, Mr. Nijalingappa. Though Mr. Nijalingappa had approached other parties with a similar request they declined to have any talks with him.

This was taken as a danger signal by the supporters of the Prime Minister. Two of her senior colleagues, Messrs. Jagjivan Ram and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad, wrote to the Congress President on August 11, 1969. In the course of their letter they said:

"As loyal and devoted Congressmen we deem it our duty to let you know that considerable confusion exists in the minds of numerous members of our Parliamentary Party regarding the talks that you had on your own initiative with some of the leaders of the Jana Sangh and Swatantra Party.

"What is agitating the minds of the members of our party is the basis on which you could possibly have had these talks. All kinds of ugly rumours are afloat and the situation has worsened because those whom you have approached and their respective parties have openly demanded the removal of the Prime Minister.

"It is difficult to appreciate the desirability, or indeed the necessity, of these talks by you on a personal level with parties

who themselves have an official candidate in the forthcoming Presidential election. Moreover, these parties are wholly opposed to the accepted ideology and policies of the Congress and particularly the nationalisation of banks which they have challenged before the Supreme Court.

"We fear that unless the whole position is fully, clarified and the basis of your talks and their readiness to support Sri Sanjiva Reddy is satisfactorily disclosed it may have grave repercussions in the Presidential election. An immediate reply is requested."[1]

In his reply to them on August 12, 1969, Mr. Nijalingappa wrote, *inter alia:*

"As per our usual practice, I have been approaching every party for its support and requesting every voter for his vote. This was done in the past by all of us, including the Prime Minister, even when the Opposition had its own candidates in the field. Not to make such an effort would be dereliction of duty. Incidentally all my colleagues in the Parliamentary Board, at its meeting on August 1 had advised me to approach various parties for support."[2]

Mr. Nijalingappa also told Pressmen on the same day that at the meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Board on August 1, all members including the Prime Minister agreed to his suggestion that he should meet the leaders of the Opposition parties and seek their support for Mr. Reddy.

Not satisfied with this reply, Messrs. Jagjivan Ram and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad wrote again to Mr. Nijalingappa on August 13, 1969, saying:

"...We regret that your reply leaves all the important questions raised by us unanswered. We have not been told as to how or why you had approached the leaders of the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party when these parties:

[1] See Appendix IV. [2] See Appendix V.

(i) Had set up their own candidate against Mr. Sanjiva Reddy;
(ii) Had openly demanded the removal of the Prime Minister;
(iii) Had openly characterised the Prime Minister as a person having Communist leanings;
(iv) Had openly opposed our socialist policies including the nationalisation of banks;
(v) Had written to the President to withhold consent to the Bank Nationalisation Bill thus seeking to propound a new and extraordinary theory of the powers of the President in respect of a Bill duly passed by Parliament."

They then stated: "The basis on which Mr. Reddy was nominated and the Prime Minister filed his nomination has now completely disappeared in view of the above points which unfortunately still remain unanswered".

And "In the circumstances our members of Parliament and the State Legislatures should be entitled to exercise their votes in the coming Presidential election according to their conscience and we expect there will be no objection to this course".[3]

Meanwhile Mr. Nijalingappa had written to the Prime Minister[4] requesting her to have a whip issued to the members of Parliament to vote in favour of Mr. Reddy and also assuring her that there was no question of toppling her and that she would be continued as Prime Minister till 1972.

The Prime Minister in her reply[5] to the Congress President on August 12, 1969, said that in the changed circumstances, stated by her colleagues, and, for constitutional reasons, it would not be right for her to have a whip issued.

Mr. Nijalingappa in his replies to the Prime Minister,[6]

[3] See Appendix VI.
[4] See Appendix VII.
[5] See Appendix VIII.
[6] See Appendix IX.

and also to her colleagues,[7] denied stoutly that there had been collusion between him and the Jana Sangh and Swatantra leaders. He made a renewed appeal to the Prime Minister to have a whip issued. In his reply to Messrs. Jagjivan Ram and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad he said: "Precisely the same thing was done by the Prime Minister at the time of the election of Dr. Zakir Husain. Mr. Kamaraj, the then Congress President, had approached the voters. If I have had to exert more than Mr. Kamaraj had to, it is because from the beginning the Prime Minister, guided, mistakenly in my opinion, by a judgment of the Supreme Court has kept aloof from her share of efforts."

Whether or not Mr. Nijalingappa was right in his opinion of the Prime Minister's reluctance to canvass for Mr. Reddy, legal opinion as expressed by the Law Minister, Mr. P. Govinda Menon, and the former Law Minister, Mr. A.K. Sen, was against the issue of the whip by the Prime Minister.[8]

There was another exchange of letters between the Prime Minister and the Congress President on August 15-16, 1969. In her letter,[9] the Prime Minister demanded the right of free vote in the Presidential election stating that refusal to concede it could "lead to a serious division in the party". On the other hand, she stated that a free vote "would rejuvenate the party, restore confidence and strengthen unity." Mr. Nijalingappa rejected the demand characterising it as "a demand for the right to vote for Mr. V.V. Giri—a candidate nominated by the Communists and communalists".[10] If this was true, it is not clear why he sought the votes of the Communists and communalists for the Congress candidate. Similarly, Mr. Patil was more rhetorical than logical when he asked: "What is the meaning of a free vote only for the Congress Party when every other political party has its own

[7] See Appendix X.
[8] See *The Hindu*, August 15, 1969.
[9] See Appendix XI.
[10] See Appendix XII.

candidate?"[11] For, then, there was no meaning in seeking the help of other political parties for the Congress candidate.

Mr. Desai asked: "A free vote for whom? A candidate supported by parties who neither in their profession nor in their practice are democratic, who believe in violence, who practice violence when it suits them, who are totalitarian and who indulge in anti-social practices?"[12] But Mr. Nijalingappa had written to Mr. Jagjivan Ram and Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad that "so long as the parties are legally functioning and are represented in the legislatures, it becomes necessary to seek their co-operation in elections that involve members of legislature."[13]

In his letter of August 15, 1969, to the Prime Minister, Mr. Nijalingappa wrote further: "History does not record of an instance where a Prime Minister, after proposing her party's candidate, not only works against him, but proclaims her support for the candidate of the Opposition." This might be true. But it is also perhaps difficult to find instances where a Prime Minister, after having been elected as the leader of the Parliamentary Party, has not been allowed to function freely. Probably, it is equally difficult to find an instance where a candidate for the office of head of the State has been chosen by the ruling party with the deliberate aim of humiliating the Prime Minister as seen already, if not also of bringing her downfall, at the earliest opportunity, as the logic of the events traced above would indicate. Perhaps, it is also difficult to find an instance when the Opposition parties after, having opposed the ruling party's candidate and setting up their own candidate, declared their willingness to support the candidate of the ruling party, to the neglect of their own candidate, as shall be seen in a moment.

[11] See *The Hindu*, August 15, 1969. [12] *Ibid.*

[13] See Appendix X.

For, if the Congress President felt that the support of the Opposition parties was necessary for the success of the Congress candidate, why did he not make an approach to them soon after the nomination of Mr. Reddy in face of the opposition of the Prime Minister? Also why did he reject the plea of the Prime Minister that the consensus was in favour of Mr. V.V. Giri? And, if the necessity was thrust upon him by the reluctance of the Prime Minister to get a whip issued in Mr. Reddy's favour,[14] would it not have been much better for him and his friends to seek an honest settlement with her instead of seeking the second preference votes of parties which have been the bitterest enemies of the Congress? These parties have been denouncing the Prime Minister as a Communist and a dictator and were inalliance with Communists to topple the Congress governments. It would appear from the utterances of the Congressmen like Mr. S.K. Patil,[15] Mrs. Tarakeshwari Sinha[16] and Mrs. Sucheta Kripalani[17] that they shared these views of the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party about the Prime Minister. Did they, then, join hands with them to remove her?

The Congress President also defended his action on the ground that he was authorised by the Congress Parliamentary Board to contact other political parties for support to Mr. Reddy. Is it not possible that the members of the Board, some at least, might have expected him to contact only those parties having a similar outlook as the Congress on political and economic matters? It would seem that in his anxiety to ensure the success of Mr. Reddy, Mr. Nijalingappa overlooked the fact that he was laying himself open to attack.

Moreover, it is difficult to believe that the Jana Sangh and

[14] See Appendix X.

[15] See *The Hindu*, August 10 and 15, 1969.

[16] *Ibid.*, August 11, 1969. [17] *Ibid.*, August 7 and 8, 1969.

the Swatantra Party were willing to support Mr. Reddy without demanding or expecting a reward for it. Their changing attitudes towards the Presidential candidates are, indeed, revealing. For, it was surprising that the Jana Sangh should have suddenly decided to back up Mr. Reddy when it refused to support him when he was first nominated by the Congress Parliamentary Board even though its President was in favour of him from the very beginning. Similarly, the Swatantra leader, Mr. N.G. Ranga, was originally in favour of Mr. V.V. Giri, though his party did not support him in deference to the wishes of the Jana Sangh and the Bharatiya Kranti Dal, who together nominated Mr. C.D. Deshmukh as their candidate. One would have, therefore, expected the Swatantra to give its second preference votes to Mr. V.V. Giri, as the Bharatiya Kranti Dal did,[18] and not to Mr. Reddy. If the reason for this change in the attitude of the Swatantra was due to the fact that Mr. V.V. Giri had signed the Ordinance on the Nationalisation of Banks, should the reason not rule out support to Mr. Reddy who was the official Congress candidate? Did the Swatantra feel or know that Mr. Reddy and Mr. Nijalingappa were not parties to Bank Nationalisation? Or was it because they were determined to bring the downfall of the Prime Minister?

Suppose the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party were not prepared to support Mr. V.V. Giri, as he was a party to Bank Nationalisation,[19] was it proper for the Congress President, as an honest Congressman, to seek their support for the Congress candidate? Did the Congress President not attach the same importance to the policies of his party, if not to the prestige of the Prime Minister? Would he not then be prepared to do the same in future in his confrontation with the Prime Minister?

This does not mean that the Congress President had

[18] See *The Hindu*, A. 1 [19] For Mr. Balraj Madhok's views

actually hatched any plot against the Prime Minister in his talks with the Swatantra and the Jana Sangh leaders. It required no imagination to see that the possibility of such a skirmish was there, if not then, at least in the future, given the bitter enmity between the Prime Minister and the Congress leaders on the one hand, and between the former and the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra, on the other.

Thus the statement of Mr. A.B. Vajpayee,[20] the President of the Jana Sangh, that he wished the Prime Minister and her friends in the Congress had cooked a less ludicrous excuse for torpedoing the election of their party candidate, contains only a half truth. For, it was possible that the Prime Minister and her supporters might not have voted for Mr. Reddy even if the Congress President had not provided them with an excuse to openly demand the right of free vote. Nevertheless, the excuse cooked up by them was not as ludicrous as Mr. Vajpayee would have us believe, even though the Congress Working Committee had exonerated the Congress President of the charge of conspiring with the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party to overthrow Mrs. Gandhi, in its "Unity Resolution"[21] adopted on August 25, 1969, which, however, did not prevent the party from breaking. Mr. Vajpayee has recently declared that his party would cooperate with the Opposition Congress led by Mr. Nijalingappa to topple the Government of Mrs. Gandhi.

Indeed, the manner in which the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party conducted the campaign for their candidate, who is an eminent person, suggests that they were not very serious about his success. Otherwise, they would have asked Mr. Nijalingappa to cast the votes of the Congress in favour of their candidate, instead of accepting the Congress President's request. If they were intent upon the defeat of Mr. Giri, surely they could have asked Mr. Nijalingappa to

[20] See *The Hindu*,, August 15, 1969. [21] See pp. 43-5.

sacrifice Mr. Reddy in favour of Mr. Deshmukh. In fact, the Swatantra and the Jana Sangh should have asked both the Prime Minister and the Congress President to vote for their candidate, as the latter were divided over Mr. Reddy's candidature. Even if they had not succeeded in their bid, they would not have been guilty of letting down their own candidate, after having invited him to run the race. And if they were not sure of success, then they should not have nominated a candidate at all, or having done so, preferred not to vote for any other candidate as many other Opposition parties did.

It would thus appear that the Jana Sangh, if not also the Swatantra, had brought in Dr. Deshmukh only as a cover to vote for Mr. Reddy and ensure his success. An analysis of the voting in the Presidential election, in the States especially, suggests that the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra gave at least some of their first preference votes to Mr. Reddy.[22]

In the circumstances, the Prime Minister and her supporters seem to have been justified, at least in part, in holding that the basis on which they had accepted Mr. Reddy's candidature had disappeared. They were, therefore, not entirely wrong in demanding a free vote in the Presidential election. It was true that this demand meant freedom to vote for Mr. V.V. Giri who was supported by the Communists and other leftist parties. So far as the support of the communalists was concerned, the Congress leaders should have known that the Jana Sangh is no less communalist than the Muslim League or the D.M.K. However, it was not proper for them to raise the cry of Communists and communalists when they had themselves first initiated the move. And, if the Prime Minister had asked for freedom to vote for Mr. Giri, it was only because the Congress leaders had succeeded in securing the votes of the Swatantra and the Jana Sangh for

[22] See *The Hindu*, August 21, 1969.

the Congress candidate. This was the first indication of the shape of things to come. For the first time, the right and left wings of the Congress had openly aligned themselves with the right and left groups, respectively, in Parliament. This fact should not be overlooked that the move was initiated by the right wing of the Congress Party led by Mr. Nijalingappa.

Mr. Vajpayee does not also seem to have been justified in ridiculing what was called the *volte face* of the Prime Minister in demanding a free vote, on the ground that an earlier suggestion from the Jana Sangh and its allies that all parties should permit their members a free vote was not accepted by the Congress Party.[23] He as well as Rajaji[24] would have been justified in doing so, had Mrs. Gandhi demanded or suggested that all parties should give a free vote to their members. It is therefore difficult to understand how Mrs. Gandhi's demand for a free vote for the members of her party could be called a *volte face*.

In fact, the suggestion of the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party for free vote by all parties was meaningless. For, if they wanted to give it to their members, they were free to do so. But to say that they would accept it if others accepted it was not a very sensible way of doing these things. For, it was not so much on inter-party issue; it was rather an intra-party one. In fact, it was not even an intra-party affair, as the parties have no right to issue whips in the Presidential election. The chief defect with our political parties appears to be that they are more conscious of finding fault with each other than looking at their own mistakes and shortcomings.

In the Presidential election the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra appear to have displayed this defect in a very high degree as has already been pointed out. But what is

[23] See *The Hindu*, August 15, 1969. [24] *Ibid.*, August 14, 1969.

surprising is that even Rajaji appears to have been a victim of this defect as is evident from his criticism of the Prime Minister's action. It would have been better if he had tried to make his party leaders stick to one candidate and try sincerely for his success. His own view appears to have been in favour of Mr. Sanjiva Reddy. It would have been better for him to persuade his party leaders to support him instead of joining the Jana Sangh in proposing a third candidate. If the Swatantra Party had supported Mr. Reddy from the beginning, then perhaps the Jana Sangh would have also done so, as its leaders were in favour of him from the beginning. This would have perhaps ensured Mr. Reddy's success even if there were a few defections in the Congress Party.

However, the Prime Minister was within her rights in refusing to get a whip issued in favour of Mr. Reddy, and in demanding a free vote in the Presidential election for the members of her party. In a constitutional democracy like ours, all political parties, and especially the Congress with its great traditions, have to function in a constitutional way. It was, therefore, unfortunate that the Congress President and other leaders should have made this a case of indiscipline.

Mr. Nijalingappa stated on August 14, 1969, that a vote against the Congress candidate would "be a clear act of indiscipline" and that action would be taken against any one guilty of indiscipline in the Presidential election.[25] And he suspended Mr. Arjun Arora, MP, from the Congress and issued a show cause notice against his expulsion from the party for having demanded a free vote. This appeared to be his real response to the Prime Minister's refusal to get a whip issued, and the demand made by Messrs. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad and Jagjivan Ram for a free vote, though he

[25] See *The Hindu*, August 15, 1969.

had appealed to them to cooperate with him in getting Mr. Reddy elected. It was this talk of indiscipline and disciplinary action against members that appears to have prompted the Prime Minister herself to come out openly in favour of a free vote to members of the Congress Party. And even before the Prime Minister's demand many members of State Legislatures, including all the Congress legislators of Jammu and Kashmir decided not to vote in favour of Mr. Reddy.[26]

Thus to argue that this demand for a free vote in the Presidential election would impair party discipline in other matters, as Mr. Morarji Desai[27] and Mr. S.K. Patil[28] attempted to do, is not only to confuse issues but also to betray ignorance of elementary knowledge of the Constitution and the principles of parliamentary democracy. As Mr. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, former Speaker of Lok Sabha, has rightly pointed out: "The Legislature party can take decisions regarding matters that come up before the Legislature, issue whips and generally exercise control over its members. The outside party can only see that the party inside does not violate any of the pledges given by the party at the time of election... *To appreciate the restricted extent of the power of the party outside .... one has to note that the party cannot give directions to the members even in regard to the election of a leader and much less has it a right to give directions to the members regarding the election of a Speaker or the President who are above parties.*"[29]

Even when a whip was issued during the previous Presidential election it is known that there were defections in the Congress Party. But there was no question of indiscipline and disciplinary action being taken against any member. It was, therefore, wrong on the part of the Congress President

[26] See *The Hindu*, August 15, 1969. [27] *Ibid.*, August 20, 1969.
[28] *The Indian Express* Bangalore, August 19, 1969.
[29] See Letters to the Editor, *The Hindu*, September 5, 1969.

to have resorted to this step in trying to force Mr. Reddy's candidature upon unwilling members. He cannot, therefore, escape blame for having created what the Prime Minister has rightly called "an extraordinary situation" over the Presidential election, necessitating on her part the demand for a free vote to the members of the party.

Not surprisingly, several members of the All-India Congress Committee from Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Delhi and West Bengal expressed no confidence in Mr. Nijalingappa and demanded an urgent AICC meeting to consider it.[30] There were parallel demands from the supporters of the Congress President for disciplinary action against the Prime Minister and her supporters. It was in this atmosphere that the Presidential election was held on August 16, 1969.

On the same day, Mr. S.K. Patil told newsmen that the party had been "stabbed in the back" by the Prime Minister and her supporters. He also said that "we would have accommodated her" if the Prime Minister had asked the Board not to announce the choice but to reconsider the issue again later at Delhi.[31] This appears to be an after thought, for, the Prime Minister did tell the Board that she was not pleased with the decision and that she would have to think of all the consequences of the decision of the Board as already indicated. Moreover, it was reported that the Prime Minister was not in favour of taking a decision on the Presidential nomination at Bangalore during the All-India Congress Committee session. If they wanted to accommodate her they could have done so even after announcing the decision, by asking Mr. Reddy to decline the nomination.

On the other hand, they were not prepared to concede her the right to change the portfolio of a Minister to which she was entitled, as Prime Minister. Neither Mr. S.K. Patil

[30] See Letters to the Editor, *The Hindu*, August 17, 1969.
[31] *Ibid.*

nor anyone else in the party would have said the same things against him had Nehru taken similar action at any time. Thus Mr. Patil's contrast between Nehru and Mrs. Gandhi, that the former was a democrat, while the latter was not,[32] appears to be entirely wrong. There are others who said that the autocratic ways of the father remain in the daughter. In fact, it was to restore the dignity and authority of the Prime Minister which the party leaders have been undermining since the death of Nehru that Mrs. Gandhi had to join issue with them over the Presidential nomination.

That the party leaders had scant respect for the prestige of the Prime Minister became all too evident from the fact that the Congress President issued show cause notices to her and Messrs. Jagjivan Ram and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad for having demanded a free vote in the Presidential election.[33] Simultaneously, Mr. S.K. Patil issued a statement which proves that what they were interested in was a split in the party rather than discipline. For, Mr. Patil said: "The Presidential election is over but the split in the Congress organisation has become wider and deeper. Whatever may be the result tomorrow, there is no denying the fact that the Indian National Congress has split perhaps beyond repair. Nobody likes to say these things but the logic of events is inexorable."[34]

Mr. Patil said further: "Heavens would not fall if Mr. Sanjiva Reddy is elected President of the Union." True; but heavens had not fallen when Mr. Reddy was not elected President of the Union. But Mr. Patil appears to have believed that this would happen as is evident from his remarks. Thus he said: "Whether Mr. Sanjiva Reddy wins or looses the Congress will not be the same again." This was so only

[32] *The Hindu*, August 17, 1969.
[33] *The Indian Express*, Bangalore, August 19, 1969. [34] *Ibid.*

because they were not prepared to admit their mistakes.

Similarly, Mr. Nijalingappa said on August 18, 1969, that while he was ready to "forgive and forget" at the personal level, he was not prepared for it so far as the organisation was concerned.[35] It will be seen later that he did precisely the reverse on August 25, 1969, in the Working Committee.

The Prime Minister, on the other hand, said on August 18, 1969, that is, shortly before Mr. Nijalingappa sent her the show cause notice: "I do not want the Congress to split, or anybody expelled or we should be forced out of the party."[36] But she warned that any disciplinary action in the wake of the Presidential election would be disastrous for the party. For, she said: "I feel that the issues involved go beyond the Presidential poll. The result of the election, one way or the other, will not resolve the differences over the manner in which our basic policies of democracy, secularism, socialism and non-alignment are implemented."

Even if it were not a conflict over basic policies, but a purely power-conflict, the Prime Minister was not wrong in her opinion that the issues involved go beyond the Presidential poll. This was also the view expressed by Mr. C. Subramaniam, who was then President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committe and Member of the Congress Working Committee, in his letter to Mr. Nijalingappa, questioning the latter's action in issuing the show cause notices to the Prime Minister and her principal Cabinet colleagues. He urged the Congress President to withdraw the notices and said: "I make this suggestion in all sincerity because I feel that the issues that have so deeply divided the party in the last few weeks go beyond the narrow confines of party discipline."[37] Mr. G.L. Nanda, the former Union Home Minister, wrote

[35] *The Hindu*, August 17, 1969. [36] *Ibid.*
[37] *Ibid.*, August 20, 1969.

to Mr. Nijalingappa saying that the latter was trying to deal with the matter "as a narrow technical issue of discipline against a few individuals" and asked him to concentrate on the "deeper causes" which had created this situation. Mr. Nanda was also reported to have questioned the competence of the Congress Parliamentary Board to select the party's Presidential candidate.[33]

Meanwhile, the result of the Presidential election was announced on the night of August 20, 1969. Mr. V.V. Giri, the independent candidate supported by the Prime Minister's group in the Congress Party, leftist parties, the Muslim League, the D.M.K. and the Akali Dal, won by the requisite majority in the second counting of votes, as neither he nor Mr. Reddy, the official Congress candidate, secured the requisite majority in the first counting of votes. The result was a big blow to the Congress Party leaders and triumph to the Prime Minister and her supporters, whose stand that there was a consensus in favour of Mr. Giri was vindicated by the victory of Mr. Giri, though this was possible by the support given him by the Prime Minister and her supporters in the Congress Party. But Mr. Reddy had secured all the second preference votes of the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party. Thus, if Mr. Giri had been nominated by the Congress Party, there is no doubt that he would have won by a thumping majority.

The effect of this set-back upon the Congress President and his followers was not immediately evident. But they continued to talk of disciplinary action against the Prime Minister and her colleagues for which a meeting of the Congress Working Committee was called by the Congress President. The Working Committee met on August 25, 1969, but no action was taken against any body. Mr. Chavan, who had been making efforts to bring about a compromise be-

[33] *The Hindu*, August 20, 1969.

tween the Prime Minister and her opponents, succeeded in preparing two compromise resolutions, with the assistance of Mr. C. Subramaniam and some other Working Committee members, which were adopted by the Working Committee unanimously.

The first resolution exonerated the Congress President from the charges of collusion with the Swatantra and Jana Sangh over the Presidential poll. It said: "The Congress President at the outset narrated the circumstances under which he approached other political parties to get their support for Sri Reddy.

"After hearing what the President stated, the Working Committee is of the opinion that the allegations made against the President were on wrong assumptions based on information available at the time and therefore they are untenable."[39]

The second resolution, termed the "Unity Resolution" was the major one and it said:

"The Working Committee views with grave concern the deep fissures which have developed in the Congress Party in the last few weeks dividing not only respected colleagues and comrades, but the entire membership of the party.

"Serious differences arose at the Bangalore session of the All-India Congress Committee and in the Parliamentary Board followed by other developments which climaxed in the defeat of Sri Reddy in the Presidential poll.

"While it is painful and unfortunate that a large segment of the Congress voters failed to support Sri Reddy, it is necessary to examine why this deep cleavage has taken place. What is needed is that the disease should be treated rather than that symptoms are dealt with.

"No political party can progress unless there is a sense of solidarity among its members. Disciplined conduct and be-

[39] *The Hindu*, August 26, 1969

haviour is an essential ingredient for the proper functioning of the party.

"However, this can be effectively ensured only on the basis of strict adherence to party policies and programmes and internal democracy within the party involving party organs at various levels.

"Unfortunately over the years there has been a weakening of the bonds of solidarity in the Congress Party leading to factionalism and erosion of discipline, which was coming in the way of its effective functioning at party and Government levels.

"A factor of crucial importance is the need for the two key figures in the organisation, the President of the Congress and the Leader of the Parliamentary Party, to work harmoniously and with mutual understanding.

"The President of the Congress has the important task of running the organisation which has the responsibility to lay down broad policies and rally the people in support of accepted policies.

"The Leader of the Parliamentary Party as Prime Minister (and) the Head of the Government has wider responsibilities to the country as a whole in the national as well as international spheres. They are not rival centres of power. They have to function in a complementary manner in the interest of the party and the country.

"The Working Committee wishes to emphasise that any attempt to denigrate either the head of the organisation or the Head of the Government is bound to hurt the party and tarnish its image leading to the weakening of both. Such attempts must be avoided.

"The Working Committee appreciates that there is deep ferment among members of the party. It believes, however, that the generality of the membership wishes ardently to restore unity within the party. Mistakes have been made on

all sides in the wake of the conflict of ideas and approaches in the last few weeks. This calls for introspection.

"A split in the party will have incalculable consequences. Let us, therefore, not say anything or do anything which is likely to widen the breach. The Working Committee calls upon all Congressmen to help create conditions in which the normal and healthy functioning of the party will be restored. Let us all strive to contribute to unity in the organisation based on commitment to the accepted policies, thus generating a new dynamism on the political and economic fronts."[40]

While the first resolution conceded victory to the Congress President in the controversy on his talks with Jana Sangh and Swatantra Party over the Presidential poll, the second was a personal triumph for the Prime Minister in her confrontation with the party leaders and the party President, as an analysis of its various paragraphs reveals. First, the third para of the resolution accepted the Prime Minister's stand on the issue of indiscipline during the Presidential poll.

Secondly, it made it clear beyond doubt that the Congress President has no say in matters of Government; that he has no authority over the Prime Minister; that one is "complementary" to the other and "not rival centres of power".

Thirdly, it emphasised that "any attempt to denigrate" either the party President or the Prime Minister "is bound to hurt the party" and that "such attempts must be avoided".

Fourthly, it acknowledged squarely that "mistakes have been made on all sides" and not merely on the part of the Prime Minister and her supporters as the Congress President and his supporters had insisted.

Finally, it called upon the Congressmen "to help create conditions of unity in the organisation based on commitment to the accepted policies". It called upon the partymen not to say

[40] *The Hindu*, August 26, 1969.

or do "anything which was likely to widen the breach".

Only a cynic would deny that this resolution did not lay the basis for a fresh start for Congressmen, though it could have done better. But the authors of the resolution appear to have made a sincere attempt to analyse the basic causes for the cleavage in the Congress Party and also to prescribe suitable remedies. But the success of the resolution did not lay in its adoption. It lay in its sincere implementation, which was possible only when there was a real change of heart on the part of the Congressmen especially those who were responsible for this cleavage.

But its adoption was not easy. For, Mr. Morarji Desai was reported to have threatened to withdraw from the meeting at one stage, if firm action was not taken against those who had violated party discipline and that Mr. Kamaraj and Mr. S.K. Patil had persuaded him from carrying his threat into action. It was also reported that the party leaders accepted this resolution only because they were in a minority in the Working Committee, as a number of members were not prepared for a showdown. It was also reported that while there were signs of satisfaction in the Prime Minister's camp, things were not well in the other camp. There were mutual accusations, etc., which were not encouraging.

It, therefore, seemed possible that the fight might be resumed sooner than later, as it indeed happened. We shall now turn to this final phase of the crisis which split the Congress almost irrevocably.

4
The Split

THE Unity Resolution, as already indicated, had called upon Congressmen "not to say or do anything which is likely to widen the breach" in the party. But the Congressmen began to say and do precisely those things which were against both the letter and the spirit of the Unity Resolution.

The Unity Resolution itself was bitterly denounced by a group of members of the Congress Parliamentary Party through their spokesman, Mr. S.N. Misra, Deputy Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party. He was reported to have said in a statement on August 26, 1969[1] that the Working Committee's decision "legitimised the demand for freedom of vote in crucial matters", and that important organs of the party like the Working Committee, the Parliamentary Board and the Central Election Commission "may become subservient to the Head of the Government, paving the way for a dictatorship". The statement further said: "The overall impression, conveyed by the two resolutions of the Working Committee, is that while the Congress President has been cleared of the charges of striking a deal with the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra, the conduct of important persons, who led the defections on a mass scale in collusion with non-democratic and non-secular forces, will remain permanently under a cloud". The statement also said that it was unfortunate that the Unity Resolution mentioned mistakes on all sides, though they "lay squarely at the doors of the group which worked against the Congress candidate". It called for

1. *The Hindu*, August 27, 1969.

"a systematic effort to cleanse the political life of chicanery, deceit, double-talk and double-crossing".

When the attention of the Congress President was drawn to this statement, he was reported to have said merely that Mr. Misra was entitled to his view.[2] It was not such a simple matter. For, Mr. Misra's statement was a challenge to the Working Committee's decisions. Further, it was one more proof of the Prime Minister's charge that there were many in the Congress Party who were indulging in personal attacks on her and denigrating the office of the Prime Minister without attracting disciplinary action of any kind.[3]

Even if one accepts Mr. Nijalingappa's view on Mr. Misra's statement, the Congress President himself appears to have violated the spirit, if not the letter of the Unity Resolution, when he told the Pressmen at the Begumpet airport that Mrs. Indira Gandhi would continue as Prime Minister till 1972.[4] This was both unnecessary and uncalled for, as it was not for the Congress President to say whether Mrs. Gandhi would be continued as Prime Minister till 1972. This is a prerogative of the Congress Parliamentary Party. Moreover, Mrs. Gandhi had taken strong objection to this earlier in her letters to Mr. Nijalingappa. Referring to this she said later that this was the greatest insult hurled at her personally. Further, it was also reported that Mr. Nijalingappa had attacked "personality cult", characterising it as a "mischievous and dangerous trend in democracy". This sounded strange from the mouths of the Congressmen, most of whom depended for about two decades for their political fortunes upon the "personality" of a single man—Nehru. Most of them would have been confined to the limbo of oblivion, but

[2] *The Hindu*, August 29, 1969.

[3] See in this connection Mr. Biju Patnaik's views—*Ibid*, September 8, 1969.

[4] *Ibid*, August 29, 1969.

for Nehru. It was meaningless on the part of such persons to accuse Nehru's daughter, if she had tried to emulate her father a little. It would have done good to many Congressmen, and does not seem to be as dangerous as her critics would have us believe. However, it was idle on the part of the Congress President to deny that he did not have any person in mind when he made a reference to "personality cult".

This was, therefore, a clear violation of the spirit of the "Unity Resolution", as some Congress members of Parliament were reported to have said.[5] Besides, Mr. Nijalingappa also said that the question of taking back Mr. Morarji Desai into the Union Cabinet was "still alive" on the basis of the decision of the Working Committee at its July 21, 1969, meeting that the Congress President and the Prime Minister should meet and settle the issue.[6] They met and the Prime Minister refused to restore the Finance portfolio to Mr. Desai and the matter ended there. The "Unity Resolution" clearly stated that the Congress President had to confine himself to organisational matters. It is, therefore, difficult to say on what basis did the Congress President feel that the issue was still alive or that the Working Committee's decision of July 21, 1969, was still in force. If the Congress President felt that Mr. Desai had to be taken into the Cabinet to make him accept the "Unity Resolution", then it was unwise on his part to attack the Prime Minister in the name of "personality cult" or to say that she would continue as Prime Minister till 1972.

The Prime Minister therefore said, "There is no change of heart on the part of those who have vehemently opposed bank nationalisation. Their reconciliation to the present situation was only tactical. They are waiting for their opportunity and would try to upset matters when they

[5] See *The Hindu*, August 30, 1969.
[6] *Ibid.*, August 29 and 31, 1969.

can."[7] That she was not altogether wrong became evident from Mr. Desai's renewed attack on the Prime Minister for indiscipline during the Presidential poll. He was reported to have warned that "if the virus of indiscipline", injected in rank and file of the Congress by "glorifying" the demand for a "free vote", was not checked and discipline brought back to the organisation, the Congress Government at the Centre might fall one day. Referring to the question of re-establishing discipline in the rank and file of the party, he was reported to have said: "Let the Prime Minister stop indiscipline first. Then only there is a meaning in enforcing discipline among the rank and file."[8]

Not surprisingly the Prime Minister hit back at Mr. Desai at a meeting with the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee members at Lucknow saying that some members in the Congress were still talking in terms of discipline in a narrow minded way. She was also reported to have said that there was always indiscipline, that some members rose in the party hierarchy through bogus membership and that despite a whip in Parliament a number of times members were given freedom to vote according to their conviction in the past.[9]

It was thus clear that the "Unity Resolution" was still-born, and that there was no change of heart on the part of Congressmen, especially the old guard of the party. For, though the Prime Minister could have perhaps neglected some of the provocations from the party leaders, the latter appear to have been determined to wreck the "Unity Resolution" as soon as they could.

It was with this intention that they appear to have transferred the struggle from the Centre to the States, where they enjoyed greater following. The Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, which had demanded disciplinary action against

[7] *The Hindu*, August 29, 1969. [8] *Ibid.*, September 9, 1969.
[9] *Ibid.*

the Prime Minister and her supporters in the wake of the defeat of Mr. Reddy, took the lead under Mr. Kamaraj's leadership. That they were not satisfied with the "Unity Resolution" became apparent when they forced Mr. C. Subramaniam, who took a leading part in drawing up the "Unity Resolution", to resign the Presidentship of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, over alleged discourtesy shown by him to Mr. K. Kamaraj, who, it was reported, was not invited to participate in the function drawn up for the Prime Minister's proposed tour of Tamil Nadu from October 3 to 6, 1969.

That the resignation of Mr. Subramaniam was forced was also clear from Mr. Subramaniam's statement[10] issued to the Press at the time of announcing his resignation on September 27, 1969. In his statement Mr. Subramaniam criticised Mr. Kamaraj's role in the Congress crisis. He blamed Mr. Kamaraj for having put up Mr. Sanjiva Reddy as the Presidential candidate on personal considerations and for not working for a consensus in the Parliamentary Board. He said: "My view is that Mr. Kamaraj had put his own factional interest above national and party interests." Referring to the failure of the Congress President to call for a meeting of the Working Committee to examine the charges made against him on the conduct of the campaign for the Presidential poll, Mr. Subramaniam said: "I was reliably informed that Mr. Kamaraj was against calling a meeting of the Working Committee. It will be interesting to analyse why the Working Committee meeting was avoided. My own view is it was purposely avoided because Mr. Kamaraj and his group were confident of victory in the Presidential election and wanted to catch the Prime Minister on the wrong foot. . . . The idea was to take action against the Prime Minister and throw her out after the Presidential

10 *The Hindu*, September 28, 1969.

election. But unfortunately for them, the election result went against their expectations."

Explaining that both Mr. Chavan and himself had, unsuccessfully, tried to bring about a compromise between Mrs. Gandhi and her opponents before the result of the Presidential poll was known, and before Mr. Nijalingappa issued the show cause notices to the Prime Minister and others, Mr. Subramaniam said: "I am reliably told that Mr. Kamaraj was responsible for persuading the Congress President to issue these notices so that everything might be ready to take action soon after the Presidential election results."

Whatever might be the actual role of Mr. Kamaraj, Mr. Subramaniam appears to be correct in his view that Mr. Kamaraj and his group were confident of victory in the Presidential poll and were getting ready to throw the Prime Minister out, soon after the result was announced. This explains the issue of the show cause notices, without waiting for the outcome of the poll. But the result of the poll had thrown all their plans into disarray and they were so unprepared for it, that they had to beat a hasty retreat in the Working Committee on August 25, 1969.

But this appears to have been only a tactical move in order to plan their strategy afresh. Their renewed strategy, as it evolved, was to capture the Working Committee by ousting as many supporters of the Prime Minister as possible and then to take action against her. The first person who was sought to be removed from the Working Committee was Mr. Subramaniam, who was an elected member of the Working Committee by virtue of his ex-officio membership of the All-India Congress Committee, in his capacity as the President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee. According to the Congress constitution, only a member of the All-India Congress Committee can contest elections to the

Working Committee. But the constitution does not say whether an elected member of the Working Committee ceases to be a member, *ipso facto*, if he loses his membership of the All-India Congress Committee. However, the Congress President was reported to have come to the conclusion that Mr. Subramaniam was no more a member of the Working Committee as he had resigned the Presidentship of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee and had thus lost his ex-officio membership of the All-India Congress Committee.

The removal of Mr. Subramaniam from the Working Committee, it was reported, would tilt the balance decisively in favour of the Congress President in the Working Committee by virtue of his casting vote.[11] This was, therefore, an alarming development to the Prime Minister's group. Therefore the Prime Minister and five other members of the Working Committee, including Mr. Chavan, addressed a joint letter to Mr. Nijalingappa, alleging that his action in removing Mr. Subramaniam Mr. Kamalapati Tripathi and Mr. Kakani Venkatarathnam, from their posts was arbitrary and against the "Unity Resolution." They wrote further:

"The action of the President is bound to have serious political repercussions and should therefore, be considered by the Working Committee at an early date.

"We, therefore, request the Working Committee which has been convened to meet on the 30th may be called to meet around the 15th. In the meanwhile, orders issued by the President should be kept in abeyance."[12]

Actually, Mr. Nijalingappa had not taken any action regarding Mr. Subramaniam's membership of the Working Committee. Mr. Nijalingappa had, therefore, no difficulty in denying the charge in his reply to the Prime Minister and her colleagues. He said: ". . . . You have stated that I

[11] *The Hindu*, October 10, and 11, 1969.

[12] Appendix XIII–A

have arbitrarily ordered removal of Mr. C. Subramaniam from the Working Committee. I wish you had checked this matter with me before coming to this conclusion and allowing it to be broadcast. I have sent no communication to Mr. Subramaniam. . . ."[13]

Mr. Nijalingappa then explained the constitutional provisions regarding the election of members to the Working Committee and said: "Now that he has ceased to be the President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, the position needs to be gone into. I was intending to write to Mr. Subramaniam on this point. . . ."

It would appear from this that the Congress President had no intention of consulting the Working Committee in the matter and might have written to Mr. Subramaniam intimating the termination of his membership, at some suitable time, or after the formal acceptance of the latter's resignation by the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee. This was what Mr. Nijalingappa did on October 31, 1969, just before the Working Committee meeting. That the Congress President would have acted unilaterally is also evident from the statement issued by Mr. S.K. Patil on October 28, 1969. He said: "This is not a matter that can be decided either by a threat or by argument or by a majority or even by a unanimous vote of any body. This is a constitutional matter. The President has the inherent right to decide finally whether, according to the constitution, Mr. Subramaniam is or is not a member of the Working Committee."[14]

Whether or not such action of Mr. Nijalingappa would have been arbitrary as alleged by the Prime Minister and her colleagues, it would have certainly tilted the balance in the Working Committee in favour of the Congress President and his group. It was, therefore, not surprising that the

[13] For the full text of the letter see Appendix XIII-B.
[14] *The Hindu*, October 29, 1969.

former should have taken the extraordinary step of writing to the Congress President without even trying to ascertain the factual position. The Congress President and Mr. S.K. Patil were, therefore, right when they said that the Prime Minister could have easily ascertained the factual position had she cared to do by talking to the Congress President on telephone. But this does not mean that the Congress President would not have taken the action alleged against him. The purpose of the Prime Minister and her group appears to have been to inform the Congress President that they would not accept unilateral action by the Congress President in the matter. It was on this ground that Mr. Chavan justified their action. He said that their action was to avert the "threat of a division in the party". "We got the information that some such thing was being done. It can be reasonably expected that we should have checked on this." Mr. Chavan said that Mr. Subramaniam was still technically the President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, and that if "a communication was issued and no action was taken from this side, this would have been a very serious problem from the point of view of the unity of the Congress."[15]

The action taken by the Prime Minister and her supporters would have been more justifiable had they waited till Mr. Nijalingappa had written to Mr. Subramaniam, or if they had taken a stand that the Congress constitution was not clear on the issue and hence action should not be taken till legal opinion was ascertained in the matter. It was reported that the Union Law Minister, Mr. P. Govinda Menon, advised the Congress President after the issue was raised, that Mr. Subramaniam could not be removed unless the party constitution was amended.[16] If this were correct, the removal of Mr. Subramaniam by Mr. Nijalingappa was arbitrary, and, against the Congress constitution.

[15] *The Hindu*, October 19, 1969. [16] *The Hindu*, October 23, 1969.

However, it was reported on October 12, 1969, that the Congress President had sent an invitation to Mr. Subramaniam to attend the Working Committee meeting on October 30, 1969.[17] This appears to have been a tactical move as is evident from the fact that Mr. Nijalingappa had later asked Mr. Subramaniam not to attend the Working Committee meeting on the ground that he was no more a member of the Working Committee as he had resigned the Presidentship of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee and had ceased to be a member of the All-India Congress Committee.

It would appear that the whole controversy could have been easily avoided if the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee had kept the acceptance of the resignation of Mr. Subramaniam in abeyance in the interests of the Congress Party. It is surprising why Mr. T.T. Krishnamachari, who was reported to have said that he was prepared to mediate between the Prime Minister and her opponents,[18] had not thought of doing this in his own State party. Had such a compromise been reached probably the whole atmosphere would have been cleared of suspicion. But not only was Mr. Subramaniam's resignation accepted, but also the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee adopted an attitude on party discipline which went against the letter and spirit of the "Unity Resolution" of the Working Committee. For, the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee was reported to have expressed deep concern over the defeat of the Congress candidate, Mr. Sanjiva Reddy, in the Presidential election, and to have urged the Working Committee to enforce discipline within the party at all costs, without fear or favour in the interest and for the healthy growth of the organisation. In supporting this line of argument, Mr. Kamaraj was reported to have said that the original resolution circulated among

[17] *The Hindu*, October 13, 1969. [18] *Ibid.*

the members demanded that the causes that led to the defeat of the Congress candidate in the Presidential election should be gone into and pointed out that the Working Committee's failure to consider this question was a great disappointment to the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee.[19]

It was reported on October 22, 1969, that Mr. Kamaraj said that his view that the "Unity Resolution" was "self-deception" was proved correct. "I told newsmen at Delhi", he said, "that we had only deceived each other."[20] It is, therefore, clear that Mr. Kamaraj accepted the "Unity Resolution" and advised others, especially Mr. Desai, who was reported to have taken an uncompromising stand on the question of discipline, to accept it only as a tactical move. At the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee meeting held on October 12, to elect a new President in place of Mr. Subramaniam, Mr. Kamaraj was reported to have told the members at a closed door session that his hopes that Mrs. Gandhi would be a good and able Prime Minister were belied by her actions, and that simply because he was responsible for her election, he would not tolerate all her mistakes. He was also reported to have charged the Prime Minister for having violated the "Unity Resolution", saying that the passing of the resolution did not mean that they should be silent.[21]

But Mr. Kamaraj appears to have forgotten that the "Unity Resolution" had settled the question of indiscipline during the Presidential election and that it was against it to talk any further about indiscipline unless they wanted to violate it. Therefore the talk of indiscipline on the part of the party leaders was a violation of the resolution. Moreover, the "Unity Resolution" had called upon the Congressmen not to speak or do anything which might increase the breach

[19] *The Hindu*, October 13, 1969. [20] *Ibid.*, October 23, 1969.
[21] *Ibid.*

in the party. Either Mr. Kamaraj and his group should not have accepted the resolution, or having accepted it, they should not have talked of either indiscipline or "personality cult", etc., which were bound to create misunderstanding. It was this that had provoked the Prime Minister to counter-attack the party leaders as has been indicated earlier. It was, therefore, not correct on the part of Mr. Kamaraj to charge the Prime Minister for having violated the "Unity Resolution".

Likewise, Mr. Kamaraj should have realised that any move to remove persons belonging to the Prime Minister's group from crucial party positions were also bound to create suspicion, especially when the party leaders had not stopped their sniping at the Prime Minister even after the "Unity Resolution".

It was under this provocation that the Prime Minister appears to have taken the decision to drop four junior Ministers from her Council of Ministers on October 15, 1969, in order to "enable her in due course to bring about certain changes which are necessary for a more cohesive and purposive direction of the work of the Council of Ministers",[22] as she wrote in her letter to Mr. M.S. Gurupadaswamy, Minister of State for Community Development, known to be one of the staunchest supporters of the Congress President, asking for his resignation from the Council of Ministers, which the latter gave under protest. The other Ministers who were asked to resign were Mr. Parimal Ghosh, Minister of State for Railways, Mr. Jagannath Pahadia, Deputy Minister for Finance, and Mr. Muthyala Rao, Deputy Minister for Social Welfare. Not surprisingly this was criticised as another act of dictatorship on the part of the Prime Minister by her opponents. Mr. S.K. Patil characterised it as an

[22] For the text of letters exchanged by the Prime Minister and Mr. Gurupadaswamy see Appendix XIV–A&B.

unprecedented act. He was more accurate, however, when he said: "The situation in the country is so tense today that even a little spark is likely to lead to conflagration."[23] Mr. Patil could have done well if he had given this advice to his colleagues, especially Mr. Desai, Mr. Kamaraj and Mr. Nijalingappa, when they began to talk of indiscipline and take other actions which were not calculated to preserve unity in the Congress as already indicated.

Besides this reprisal against their opponents, the Prime Minister and her supporters also decided to go ahead with their signature campaign for an early session of the All-India Congress Committee in order to elect a new President in the place of Mr. Nijalingappa.[24] A requisition to be addressed to the Congress Working Committee and signed by a majority of the members of the All-India Congress Committee including the leading supporters of Mrs. Gandhi, namely, Mr. Jagjivan Ram, Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad and Mr. Y.B. Chavan, was released to the Press. The following is the text of the letter addressed to the Working Committee:

"We the undersigned members of the All-India Congress Committee request the Congress Working Committee to convene a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee under Article 12 (B) (D) to consider at the earliest possible time the following resolution.

"The acceptance of the Prime Minister's note embodying a radical programme by the Bangalore session of the All-India Congress Committee and the bold steps taken by her to nationalise the major banks created a sense of confidence in the masses that the progressive and socialist policies of the Congress would be fully carried out.

"The resolution of the Congress Working Committee

[23] *The Hindu*, October 17, 1969.
[24] *Ibid.*, October 19, 1969.

passed on August 25, 1969, generated the hope that the unity necessary for the full effective implementation of the said policies and programmes would be brought about. Unfortunately the wind of change which has been welcomed widely by the nation appears to have generated tensions within the party, which threaten the execution of these basic policies to which the Congress stand committed.

"It is evident that the declared policies of the Congress cannot be fully implemented unless the Congress organisation as a whole is attuned to this purpose and gave its whole-hearted co-operation particularly at its top level. The All-India Congress Committee, therefore, resolves that the programme of electing a new Congress President in December 1969 when the term of the present President would have ordinarily come to an end, be undertaken on the basis of present delegates and steps to that end be taken without delay so that the election of the new President is completed by December 30, 1969."[25]

While the Prime Minister's men went ahead with this signature campaign, Mr. Nijalingappa, Mr. Kamaraj and Mr. N. Sanjiva Reddy met at Bangalore to decide their strategy to meet the threat posed by their opponents to their political survival. After these discussions, Mr. Nijalingappa told Pressmen that the signature campaign constituted a violation of discipline.[26] The deputy leader of the Congress Working Committee, Mr. S.N. Misra, who had earlier criticised the "Unity Resolution", said that the Working Committee members, especially those nominated by the President, should have resigned from it before associating themselves with the requisition for an All-India Congress Committee session to elect a new President. He also said: "If the Prime Minister had the right to have a Cabinet of

25 *The Hindu*, October 19, 1969.
26 *Ibid.*, October 22, 1969.

her choice, the Congress President too had the right to have a Working Committee of his choice."[27] This is obviously a misleading comparison. The Congress constitution empowers the Congress President to nominate only a part of the Working Committee and it does not authorise him to remove either a nominated or an elected member. He could only suspend a member on charges of indiscipline or misconduct. The Prime Minister, on the other hand, has the prerogative to appoint and dismiss Ministers.

Speaking at Patna, Mr. Desai described the requisition as an act of indiscipline.[28] Mr. S.K. Patil said in a lengthy statement that there was no need for either propaganda or requisition either to call for a Working Committee meeting or an All-India Congress Committee session, as the Working Committee was scheduled to meet on November 1, and would decide the venue for the All-India Congress Committee, which had to be decided anew in view of the riots in Ahmedabad where the All-India Congress Committee would have been held according to the earlier decision of the Working Committee.[29]

Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad and other supporters of the Prime Minister, however, defended their move on the ground that the All-India Congress Committee had the right to call for a meeting and also revoke its earlier decisions and also those of the Working Committee in regard to the continuance of the Congress President in office till the end of 1970.[30]

It was of course no more a legal or constitutional issue. It was a question of a final showdown, and, split in the party which appeared imminent. For the Prime Minister was reported to have demanded the "active"[31] support of

[27] *The Indian, Express*, (Bangalore), October 23, 1969.
[28] *The Hindu*, October 27, 1969. [29] *Ibid.*, October 29, 1969.
[30] *Ibid.* [31] *Ibid.*

the party to her policies and programmes, in her meeting with Mr. Veerendra Patil, Chief Minister of Mysore, who undertook a trip to Delhi, probably on the initiative of Mr. Nijalingappa, which the leaders appeared unwilling to accept without achieving any of their aims in their confrontation with the Prime Minister. On the other hand, both sides were reported to be preparing for a showdown in the Working Committee on November 1, 1969.

There were unmistakable signs of the coming showdown. It became known on October 31, 1969, that the Congress President had written a six-page letter to Mrs. Gandhi on October 28, 1969, accusing her of various acts of indiscipline. In this letter,[32] which he released to the Press on November 3, 1969, Mr. Nijalingappa merely summarised the various charges levelled against the Prime Minister by him and his supporters since the Bangalore session of the All-India Congress Committee. The letter is said to have been drafted by Mr. Asoka Mehta. But it does no credit to him, as it does not stand scrutiny. It contained at best as will be seen below.

First, while Mr. Nijalingappa took care to point out that the Prime Minister did not mention any name for the Presidential candidate "till two hours before we met in the Parliamentary Board to decide on the candidate, on the 12th of July," he did not explain the reasons for his rejection of the candidates proposed by the Prime Minister. Nor did he explain why he and his supporters did not accept a compromise candidate when the Prime Minister was not in favour of their candidate. He did not also answer the charge levelled against them by Mr. Y.B. Chavan and Mr. C. Subramaniam that they had spurned the latter's bid for a postponement of the decisions of the Board.

Similarly, while he continued to talk of parliamentary

[32] See Appendix XV-A.

democracy, he did not seem to realise that the nomination of Mr. Reddy was against its basic principles, that to make the Presidential election a question of party discipline was against the constitution of the country.

Again, while he was careful to remind the Prime Minister that she and her colleagues admitted that their allegation that he had entered into secret understandings with the Swatantra and the Jana Sangh was "untenable", he conveniently forgot to mention that the "Unity Resolution" had mentioned that mistakes were made on all sides and not merely on the side of the Prime Minister, as the Congress President and his supporters had insisted prior to and after the "Unity Resolution". In fact, the "Unity Resolution" was a vindication of the Prime Minister's position vis-a-vis the party leaders.

Referring to the letter written by the Prime Minister and her supporters about Mr. Subramaniam's alleged removal from the Working Committee, Mr. Nijalingappa wrote: "Your recent letter makes me wonder whether you grant the President of the organisation the right to enforce the constitutional provisions of the organisation, if the application of rules and resolutions affect those in whom you are interested." But the Congress President did not explain why he was always anxious to enforce the constitutional provisions, resolutions, rules, etc., only against people known to be the supporters of the Prime Minister, while leaving his known supporters scot-free for similar acts of indiscipline, etc. To wit, while he took prompt action against Mr. Shashi Bhushan, member of Parliament, for having demanded a "free vote" in the Presidential election, to which the latter was entitled, constitutionally, he had turned a deaf ear to the personal attacks made against the Prime Minister by senior Congressmen, both before and after the "Unity Resolution". He had not said or done anything against Mr. Misra and

others, who openly attacked the "Unity Resolution". On the other hand, he himself indulged in personal attacks against the Prime Minister, as already indicated. This, in spite of the fact that the "Unity Resolution" categorically declared that all attempts to denigrate the head of the Government and the head of the party should be avoided.

Besides, he also tried to reopen the question of Mr. Morarji Desai's return to the Cabinet, presumably as Finance Minister even though as he himself acknowledged that the "Unity Resolution" had pointed out that both the parliamentary wing and the organisational wing had their respective spheres of responsibility within which they had to work. Moreover, Mrs. Gandhi had not resorted to "peremptory dismissal of Mr. Desai" as Mr. Nijalingappa had put it, though she would have been justified in doing so; it was only Mr. Morarji Desai's refusal to accept a change in his portfolio, and his supporters' inability or unwillingness to prevail upon him, that cost him his position in the Government. In spite of all this Mr. Nijalingappa wrote: "I have no doubt in my mind that I have scrupulously adhered to the letter and spirit of this resolution, cautioning that the past should not be a precedent, exhorting for discipline and unity, and asking for strict adherence to policies and discipline in the organisational and legislative wings."

It was, therefore, not unnatural that he should have been "surprised to receive" the letter of the Prime Minister and her supporters regarding Mr. Subramaniam's membership of the Working Committee. Though the Prime Minister and her supporters acted in a haste in writing the letter without ascertaining facts, Mr. Nijalingappa himself admitted that he was thinking of writing to Mr. Subramaniam in the matter. He later wrote to him that he was not a member of the Working Committee, even after sending an invitation

to him, and against legal opinion and when it was recognised that the constitutional position was not clear. The Congress President appears to have done this as a reprisal against the move of the Prime Minister and her supporters to unseat him from the Presidentship of Congress. The entire conduct of Mr. Nijalingappa in this crisis would seem to indicate that he judged the Congressmen on the basis of their loyalty to him and his authority rather than the principles and policies of the party and its constitution.

As seen already in the Working Committee meeting on August 25,1969, he accepted the "untenability" of the accusation made against him and did not insist upon disciplinary action against the Prime Minister and her supporters. Again, he accused the Prime Minister on November 3, 1969, of having committed "an unpardonable act of gross indiscipline, a flagrant violation of the constitution of the Congress," for passing a "resolution characterising some of my actions as unconstitutional and backing the move for requisition to remove me from the presidentship of the Congress and summoning a 'special session of the All-India Congress Committee' in Delhi on November 22 and 23, 1969."[33]

Yet he wrote to the Prime Minister accusing that "you seem to have made personal loyalty to you the test of loyalty to the Congress and the country".

Referring to the relationship between the legislative wing and the party, Mr. Nijalingappa wrote: "The relation between the legislative wing and the organisation cannot . . . be formulated on the assumption that the party will always be in power." This is wrong for the simple reason that the legislative wing does not lose its importance if the party is in minority in the legislature. As Mr. K. Santhanam has pointed out, the relationship between the legislative wing

[33] Appendix XV-B.

and the party does not change with the position of the party in the legislature.[34] For, in a parliamentary democracy the leader of the legislative wing is also the leader of the party. It is strange that awareness of history which the Congress President so eagerly displays in his letters should have served no purpose in understanding the fundamental point that the Congress constitution itself was framed in the pre-independence days, when the Congress was a political party in a country ruled by an alien power that the Congress President is incompatible with the principles of parliamentary democracy.

This letter might have convinced the Prime Minister and her supporters that there was really no change of heart on the part of the old guard as the Prime Minister pointed out earlier. As if to confirm this, the Congress President wrote letters to Mr. Subramaniam and Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad, on the night of October 31, 1969, asking them not to attend the Working Committee meeting the next morning.[35] He informed the former that he was no more a member of the Working Committee. To the latter, he wrote that the Congress President who had nominated him, had lost confidence in him.

The result was predictable. The Prime Minister and her supporters boycotted the Working Committee meeting on November 1, 1969, and held a separate meeting at the residence of the Prime Minister and under her Presidentship passed a resolution,[36] criticising strongly the action of the Congress President and also the rejection of the requisition for the All-India Congress Committee session by the Working Committee presided over by the Congress President held at the Congress office. They also decided to call a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in New

[34] *The Hindu*, August 20, 1669. [35] *Ibid.*, November 1, 1969.
[36] Appendix XVI.

Delhi on November 22 and 23. In a letter addressed to the Congress President, Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad criticised the former's action against him as illegal and declared that he was still a member of the Working Committee.[37]

On November 2, 1969, Mr. Nijalingappa wrote to Mrs. Gandhi asking her to "explain (her) reported association with the move to convene an illegal and unconstitutional meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in violation of the party constitution and resolutions of the Working Committee."[38] Mrs. Gandhi in her reply accused the Congress President of flouting the Congress constitution.[39] In this letter the Prime Minister also refuted all the charges made against her by the Congress President in his letter dated October 28, 1969. On November 3, 1969, the Congress President wrote to the Prime Minister again, accusing her of "an unpardonable act of gross indiscipline"[40] on the same grounds.

While these mutual accusations continued, Mrs. Gandhi called for the resignation of Dr. Ram Subhag Singh, the Railway Minister, on November, 4, 1969, for having subscribed to the Working Committee's resolutions criticising the policies of the Government, which the latter submitted promptly.[41] For the next two days there was a showdown in the accusations and counter-accusations on both sides. There was also a move for a compromise undertaken by some Congress Chief Ministers notably Mr. Veerendra Patil of Mysore who succeeded in bringing about a meeting between Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. Nijalingappa on November 7, 1969, in New Delhi. The talks failed as no meeting ground could be found between them. While the Prime Minister insisted upon the taking back of Messrs. Subramaniam, Mr. Fakhruddin Ali

[37] Appendix XVII. [38] Appendix XVIII. [39] Appendix XIX.
[40] n. 33. For the Prime Minister's reply to this letter see Appendix XV-C. [41] Appendix XX.

Ahmad and Dr. S.D. Sharma into the Working Committee, the latter insisted that the Prime Minister should take back all the Ministers who had been ousted from her Cabinet since the Bangalore session of the All-India Congress Committee.

Addressing a Press conference[42] on November 8, 1969, Mrs. Gandhi held the Congress President responsible for the break down of their talks the previous day. She dismissed fears of instability in the country on account of the *split* in the Congres Party. She defended her action against Dr. Ram Subhag Singh. About Mr. Subramaniam's removal from the Working Committee she said: "I think Mr. Subramaniam should have been allowed to come to the meeting of the Working Committee. You could have said there is a constitutional difficulty (about his continuance in the Committee). Then we would have said perhaps that it is better for him to resign or do something else." Answering a question whether the Congress President had no prerogative to reconstitute the Working Committee similar to her prerogative to appoint and dismiss Cabinet Ministers, she said: "Why don't you read the (Congress) constitution. I do not think there is any such specific power. I am not a constitutional expert but I do know how Cabinet changes take place in other countries." Asked whether the Congress President's resignation might resolve the crisis, she said: "It may help, I do not know." Asked about the charges of indiscipline against her she said: "I do think I was ignored in the Congress selection of the Presidential candidate at Bangalore. It is very much part of the Prime Minister's business to be involved in it. Therefore, it is a very wide question of what discipline is." On the other side, it was announced by Mr. Nijalingappa, on the same day, that the Congress Working Committee would meet on November 11, 1969, two days earlier than

[42] *The Hindu*, November 10, 1969.

scheduled, and that the show cause notice to the Prime Minister would be considered by it. He said that invitations were sent to all members, except the three members who were dropped from the Committee.

Meanwhile, the Congress Chief Ministers continued their efforts at mediation between the two sides. But the Congress Working Committee with 11 of the original 21 members present met on November 11, 1969, and considered three draft resolutions for action against the Prime Minister, without, however, taking action. But it was reported that it was decided to remove the Prime Minister from the Congress Party.[43] It appeared as though the foster-parents who had assumed control over the family had expelled the child when it claimed its rightful authority in the family.

The fateful decision was taken by the Congress Working Committee of 11 out of 21 members on November 12, 1969, after rejecting a peace formula evolved by the Chief Ministers.[44] The meeting was presided over by the Congress President, Mr. S. Nijalingappa. After expelling the Prime Minister, they called upon the Congress Parliamentary Party to elect a new leader—a clearly unconstitutional act. They expressed the hope that the Congress Parliamentary Party would stand by the party.

The supporters of the Prime Minister denounced the decision in categorical terms. They said: "We want to state categorically that the action taken by Mr. Nijalingappa is illegal and of no validity. The Prime Minister still continues to be a member of the Congress organisation and continues to be the leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party." They said further: "Shrimati Indira Gandhi continues to be the leader of the (Congress Parliamentary) party unless the party expresses no-confidence in the leader. As long as she

[43] *The Hindu*, November 12, 1969.

[44] For the text of the Resolution see Appendix XXI.

continues to enjoy the support of the Parliament she is entitled to function as the Prime Minister. It will be the saddest day for Indian democracy if a small group of men without even having the mandate of the organisation for this purpose should dare to take this step with a view to displacing the Prime Minister."[45]

Mr. Y.B. Chavan said: "It is a small group functioning which was trying to equate itself with the Congress organisation. They have been acting in an arbitrary manner."[46] As the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Mr. K. Brahmananda Reddy, aptly put it, the action of the Congress President and his group was a "desperate"[47] step. And *The Hindu* commented: "Whatever the rights or wrongs of the Working Committee's drastic decision, one can concede that the party High Command had either to act as it had done or vanish from the Congress political forum altogether."[48] It would have been more honourable for them to quit the party than to take this meaningless action after all their big talk of democracy, discipline, etc. For, when it became a question of their political survival, they acted in the most undemocratic way. It was, therefore, meaningless, if not hypocritical, on their part to have accused the Prime Minister of dictatorship and fascism, when she acted in a more democratic and constitutional way, when she felt that her position and authority in the party and the Government were at stake.

Whereas the Prime Minister succeeded in her onslaught on the party leaders, they made mistake after mistake, which culminated in the supreme folly of expelling the Prime Minister from the Congress and asking the Congress Parliamentary Party to elect a new leader.

Their folly became all the more glaring when an over-

[45] *The Hindu*, November 13, 1969. [46] *Ibid.*
[47] *Ibid.*, November 14, 1969. [48] *Ibid.*, November 13, 1969.

whelming majority of the Congress Parliamentary Party refused to honour the directive of the party leader, quite correctly. On the other hand, they declared: "The Congress Parliamentary Party declares that the decision of Mr. Nijalingappa and his associates to remove the Prime Minister from the primary membership of the Congress is invalid and unjustified. Shrimati Indira Gandhi continues to be leader of the party and enjoys the full confidence of the party."[49]

At least after this humiliation, the Congress President and his associates could have perhaps left the party either to join the Opposition parties with whom they could have formed an Opposition party as they have done at present, with a new name instead of trying to call themselves the old or the real Congress, which seems meaningless and against elementary common sense.

This, however, was the logical end of the crisis in the Congress.

[49] *The Hindu*, November 14, 1969.

Conclusion

THOUGH many people in India were afraid that a split in the Congress Party might result in instability and chaos in the country, events since the expulsion of the Prime Minister from the Congress Party by the party leaders have proved conclusively that there is no such danger at present. It is not posssible for us to say what would happen in future. But it seems possible to speculate on ways and means by which the split in the Congress could be turned into a positive good for the country. Before doing so, it would seem better to make a few concluding observations on the crisis itself.

From the analysis of the crisis described in the preceding pages, it would appear that the Prime Minister did not initiate any move by herself, but had only reacted to the moves made by the party leaders, in order to undermine her authority in the party and the Government. The trouble arose because the party leaders claimed the right to control the Prime Minister and her actions in the party and the legislature. The Prime Minister is the leader of the legislature party and has, therefore, freedom to take decisions in regard to all members falling in her sphere. The Congress President or other leaders have no authority over her in these matters. Nor has the Congress President any freedom in the organisational matters because he is not the leader of the party. He is only the organisational head and has to function as such. The organisational head cannot, and should not, take decisions by-passing the Prime Minister, who is, strictly speaking, the leader of the party and the head of the Government. This position was made clear in the "Unity

Resolution", in somewhat ambiguous terms, when it was declared that the Prime Minister and the Congress President were not rival centres of power. Even otherwise, the practice in England, which is the model of our parliamentary system, should have been followed by the Congress leaders as was done in the past, when Nehru was the Prime Minister.

It would also be seen that while the Prime Minister was quite severe in her reactions against the moves made by the party leaders, and quite determined to have her way, she was also prepared for a compromise at every stage, consistent with her position and authority in the party and the Government. It was this preparedness, if not eagerness, that appears to have led her to commit the major indiscretion of filing the nomination papers of the Congress candidate, without ensuring the acceptance of her decision by the Congress leaders to take over the Finance portfolio from Mr. Morarji Desai. It was the refusal of Mr. Morarji Desai and his supporters to accept a compromise, coupled with their failure to accept the Prime Minister's disinclination to get a whip issued in favour of the Congress candidate, and the talks which the Congress President had with the Jana Sangh and Swatantra leaders to secure their votes for the Congress candidate, that led her to demand for a *free vote* in the Presidential election.

Similarly, while describing the Prime Minister as a dictator for having refused to accept the Parliamentary Board's choice of the Presidential candidate, Mr. Morarji Desai said that even Mr. Harold Wilson, the Prime Minister of England, had to bow to the wishes of the party when the latter refused to accept a Bill proposed by him. But neither Mr. Morarji Desai nor any of his supporters respected the directives of the party as embodied in the Working Committee's "Unity Resolution," which did not take a hard line on the Prime Minister's "indiscipline" in the Presidential

election. And they could not secure the support of either the All-India Congress Committe or the Congress Parliamentary Party in their stand against the Prime Minister. This cannot be dismissed by the convenient argument that the members of the All-India Congress Committee and the Congress Parliamentary Party were pressurised by the Prime Minister and her colleagues. It was reported that even neutral Congressmen were unhappy with the Congress President's unilateral action in removing both Mr. Subramaniam and and Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad from the Working Committee, less than 12 hours before the scheduled meeting of the Working Committee on November 1, 1969.

Thus, it is the rank and file of the Congress Party that came out with full honours in this bitter struggle for supremacy between the Prime Minister and the party bosses. It was they who stood by the party, and not the leaders. For while a majority of them stood by the Congress candidate during the Presidential election in spite of the Prime Minister's demand for a *free vote*, they refused to be carried away by the demand of the party leaders, for disciplinary action against the Prime Minister. Again, they refused both in the All-India Congress Committee and the Congress Parliamentary Party to accept the suicidal steps by the Congress President and his supporters in expelling the Prime Minister from the Congress Party.

Therefore it is wrong to call this struggle between the Prime Minister and the party leaders as a struggle between the Prime Minister and the party. It was not even a struggle between the party and the Government. In fact, it was a struggle for supremacy between the Prime Minister and the party leaders which the former won. Hence the claim of the latter that they are the real Congress does not sound convincing. It is difficult to say what the Prime Minister and her supporters would have done had they lost the battle. It would

have been equally meaningless if they were to make such a claim after having lost the support of a majority in the party.

It would be better perhaps if the group led by Mr. Nijalingappa seeks a merger with the Swatantra and like minded parties with a democratic and secular outlook. Except on economic policy there seems to be a large area of agreement between the Swatantra and the group led by Mr. Nijalingappa, especially in their opposition to the Congress Party led by the Prime Minister and to the Prime Minister herself. There should be no difficulty for Mr. Nijalingappa and his supporters to come to an agreement with the Swatantra Party immediately. Though they are calling themselves socialists, it is not necessary to do so. Many of them are associated with conservatism in the public image. Consequently it would be difficult for them to win popular support on the basis of socialism. They cannot present a picture of socialism which is more radical than that presented by the Congress. We are apt to feel that their advocacy of socialism is to embarrass the Government and to force the latter to take those radical measures which would wean the conservative elements that still remain in the Congress to their side. It would be easier for them to win these elements, if they take to conservatism, when it would be possible for them to merge with other conservative parties notably the Swatantra. If this were achieved, then it is possible that the Jana Sangh also might accept a merger and be prepared to abandon its communal leanings. Otherwise, the Jana Sangh could be left to itself. Such a merger might create a strong opposition party which might be able to provide an alternative government to the Congress Government.

A similar polarisation might then take place to the Left. The Congress might seek the support of the Communist groups, if they are prepared to abandon their anti-national

and anti-democratic views and action. And the possibility of power and position might well change the attitude of many. Even otherwise many Congressmen like Mr. V.K. Krishna Menon, who left the Congress to seek the support of the Communists could join the Congress and make it a real socialist party. Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan might also think of joining the Congress. He has been advocating polarisation in the Congress and he can give a lead to others in this respect. Probably the Communist Party could then be isolated and ultimately eliminated.

This may be a better and more useful way of serving the cause of democracy in India than attempts at forming all-party governments either at the Centre or the States. We feel that all-party government is not in the interests of either the evolution of a stable democracy under a two-party system or of ensuring clean and selfless administration. It might lead to a mushroom growth of political groups, all claiming representations in the government. There can be no useful government if political parties multiply in this way having a large number of ministers. Even at present the ministries are expanding into larger and larger bodies. It would not be difficult to imagine what the state of affairs would be under all-party governments.

If a polarisation as suggested here were achieved, then India would be having a stable two-party system as in America and England. Indian democracy would then have turned the corner and reached maturity. If this were achieved in the aftermath of the Congress crisis, it would be something to remember in the history of Indian democracy. Otherwise, the split in the Congress Party would be forgotten before long, as an insignificant episode, with no practical and tangible contribution to Indian democracy.

APPENDIX I

Text of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's Note on Economic Policy.

I have seen the note sent by Shri Sadiq Ali incorporating his own suggestions and those made by Shri Subramaniam. This is all right as far as it goes. The question is whether it goes far enough.

I have not been able to read the note by Shri Chandra Sekhar and others very thoroughly. I have merely glanced at it. But it seems to me that full or partial action is possible on the following suggestions:

Impose ceiling on unproductive expenditure and conspicuous consumption of corporate bodies.

Nationalised financial institutions should introduce a change in credit-worthiness criteria in their lending policies so as to encourage professional and competent persons.

Special efforts should be made to finance new entrepreneurs in less-developed regions and a special fund should be provided for the provision of assistance to backward regions.

Expeditious appointment of Monopolies Commission manned by persons of integrity.

Public sector projects should be given more autonomy and manned by young, competent persons committed to the project.

Special effort should be made to build up a cadre of public sector projects.

Most of the consumer industries should be reserved for development of the small scale sector and entry of big business should be banned in these products.

Special effort should be made to encourage new talent to provide avenues of employment to the young and educated.

Foreign capital should not be allowed to enter fields in which local technical 'know-how' is available. Heavy penalties should be imposed on those who indulge in restricted trade practices.

Service co-operatives should be built up in rural areas. Special assistance should be provided to small agriculturists and farm co-operatives to enable them to take up processing of agro-based and other industries. Special attention should be paid to the development of minor irrigation projects, etc.

There are other suggestions which may not fit within the present policy framework. However, I have already asked the Finance Ministry and the Planning Commission to look into the feasibility of imposing ceiling on incomes and holdings of urban properties.

There is a great feeling in the country regarding the nationalisation of private commercial banks. We had taken a decision at an earlier AICC but perhaps we may review it. Either we can consider the nationalisation of the top five or six banks or issue directions that the resources of banks should be reserved to a larger extent for public purposes.

Investments of banks in Government securities stood at 24.57 per cent on June 13. This is of course a fluctuating figure. During the busy season banks liquidate their investments in Government securities and finance trade and industry. During the slack season, when the funds return, investments in securities increased. This figure of investment in securities could be raised on the average for both slack and busy seasons by about five per cent.

This will make available about Rs. 200 crores for the public sector. Against this, it may be argued that this will involve denial of credit to trade and industry and will also affect the profitability of the banks. But in times of credit squeeze, private industry somehow adjusts itself. They mobilise deposits on their own, cut their inventories, or bring in unaccounted money and somehow manage. The question whether banks' investment in Government securities should not be raised has to be seriously considered. If necessary this extra five per cent can be invested in special types of securities, proceeds being utilised for quick yielding schemes like minor irrigation programmes, rural electrification, fisheries, etc.

Even after the new policy of social control and reconstitution of the board of directors, the former industrialist-chairmen of the banks still continue on the board and naturally influence the present chairmen who had previously been general managers. We may examine whether through legislation or otherwise we can prevent these men from continuing on the boards. The chief executive of the banks will not then feel obliged to the former chairmen and may be expected to take an independent line in regard to lendings.

While it may not be practical to nationalise all import and export, can we not consider the nationalisation of the import of raw materials? This would make collective bargaining possible and might get us better prices. The policy of the distribution of such import licences

should also be reviewed. We should review the licensing system so that licences are not given only to the bigger houses. Shares could be distributed more equitably.

We have already decided in the Cabinet that Ministries of the Central Government should first approach the public sector with regard to their requirements before they decide to buy from the private sector or import. I believe some State Governments have issued such directions to their Ministries, but Congress Governments have a special responsibility in this regard.

Some thought should also be given to profit-sharing in industrial establishments, but alongside this some schemes should be thought of with regard to incentives for greater production as well as the regulation of the work.

I fully realise that overall development is the best and the only reliable way of increasing employment opportunities. However, the situation is so acute in the country that it has become necessary to have some special programmes to give employment in the rural areas as well as to the educated. Naturally whatever scheme we think of cannot be adequte to meet the situation but it should give the impression that we are taking a first step and making a genuine effort.

"Land reform: Land reform is no less important. If we do not act urgently, grave political and economic problems will arise. From time to time, suggestions have been made to improve the lot of the tenant and of landless agricultural labour:

1. Declare all tenancies as non-resumable.
2. Give the tenants the right to mortgage their interest in land for obtaining credit.
3. Place restrictions on sale of land by Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes in favour of others.
4. Enforce ceiling on land holdings energetically.
5. Draw up programme for distribution of Government waste-land and land held by panchayats.
6. Enact legislation to protect tenants and agricultural workers from their house sites.

If these points are agreed to the following minimum programme is indicated:

1. A tenant should not be liable for eviction as long as he pays his rent regularly. Provision to this effect exists in tenancy laws of most States, but the law is not enforced effectively. States should be asked to set up special machinery for effective implementation of this measure

Penalties should be suitably enhanced.

2. There should be a proper record of rights of tenants.

3. Land ceiling laws already implemented should be enforced.

4. Restrictions could be placed on purchase of land belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, but whether similar restriction could also be placed on land belonging toBac kward Classes is doubtful. The list of Backward Classes is pretty long in many States.

The suggestion that tenants should also be given the right to hypothecate their interest in land to obtain credit for agricultural development may meet with resistance. There would be no serious objection to it being made available for short-term purposes, for example, seeds, fertilizers, etc., on the security of the crop. But in regard to long-term loans for such purposes as sinking of wells, installation of pump-sets, etc., landholders may well insist on their consent being obtained.

But if we can at least make a beginning with regorous and effective enforcement of the existing laws, we could have demonstrated our earnestness and reduced some of the tensions in the countryside.

A review of agricultural wages is also called for in the light of increased yields now obtaining. Minimum wages for agricultural labour may have to be prescribed for each tract and enforced. This will enable landless labourers to participate in the fruits of the Green Revolution. These are just some stray thoughts rather hurriedly dictated.

APPENDIX II

Text of Mr. V.V. Giri's Statement of July 13, 1969.

"The Congress Parliamentary Board has announced its decision on the choice of its candidate for the Presidentship of India. While I have respect for those who have decided against my nomination, I may be permitted in all humility to disagree with their stand. I do not wish to question their motives but I sincerely feel that neither have they done justice to the country nor have they been fair to the organisation to which they belong.

"The highest office of the land must be one that is above party politics. While the majority party has every right to choose its nominee, in a democracy care should be taken to see that the candidate so selected enjoys, as far as possible, the confidence of other groups also. I am deeply pained by the recent events that have tended to lower the dignity and moral authority of this august office.

"The framers of the Constitution have devised the supreme pivotal organ of the Head of the State as a symbol of the unity of the nation, and it is, therefore, necessary that the office of the President should be kept scrupulously above party considerations. National solidarity and the very future of democracy in our country should not be allowed to be jeopardised by factional politics. I can only say that the Congress Parliamentary Board has failed to give a correct lead to the country, especially at a time when they should have risen above partisan approach.

"In my long public career extending over half a century, I never sought any office. I looked upon the various positions that I was privileged to hold in the national life as opportunities for service. Whenever I found that my continuance in office went against the call of my conscience, I had not hesitated even for a moment to renounce the same. I have always considered the dictates of my conscience and the duty to the nation as supreme and it is this that has impelled me to decide to stand for election for the Presidentship.

"I do not say that I should have been chosen because I was elected Vice-President by a majority of votes of both Congress and non-Congress parties two years ago. Some well-meaning sections believe that if other things are equal, the Vice-President by convention should

become the President automatically when a vacancy arises. While one cannot ignore this view, I do not consider this of primary importance. I would only say that the candidate selected for the highest office should possess character, integrity, patriotism, experience, record of service and sacrifice. I feel in all modesty I could claim to have these attributes in some measure.

"It has been my privilege to have been associated with Gandhiji from 1913 when he was leading the final struggle to protect the legitimate interests of Indian settlers in South Africa. I had the fortune of participating, as a young student at Dublin, in the freedom movement of Ireland and this led to my deportation from U.K. in 1916. In 1918, I was one of the first batch of satyagrahis selected by Gandhiji to protest against the obnoxious Rowlatt Act and to disobey the draconian Press Laws. From that time, I have been an ardent follower of the Father of the Nation in the very many campaigns he had to wage in securing the freedom of our country and the economic emancipation of the masses. My dedicated services to the cause of labour over five decades of my public life is well known.

"Gandhiji taught us that a true satyagrahi will wage a moral struggle against any injustice irrespective of consequences. It is in this spirit that I have now decided to stand for election.

"Some doubts have been raised whether at this age of mine, I could bear the burden of the office of the President of India. When I was elected Vice-President two years ago I was chosen for a full term of five years. It is rather curious that the question of age should have been raised now. I have been fortunate enough to enjoy good health all along and even now I continue to do so.

"The country to-day faces many issues of grave and difficult nature. The need of the hour is national integration and unity among all sections to fight divisive forces. The nation can progress only through the whole-hearted co-operation of everyone as that alone will ensure the raising of the standard of living of the common man and building the India of our dreams. According to the supreme law of the land, it is the duty of the President to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and the law and devote himself to the service and well-being of the people. It shall be my endeavour, as it has always been, to the best of my ability, to uphold in letter and spirit, the Constitution of India."

APPENDIX III-A

Text of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's letter to Mr. Morarji Desai dated July 16, 1969

"For long we have been debating the question of Government's basic economic policies and the broad direction which it is necessary to give to the process of socio-economic changes, so that even the poorest sections of our people have a real feeling of hope that they can fulfill some of their aspirations, at least for their children within the framework of our democracy.

"The matter came up prominently for consideration at the last meeting of the AICC in Bangalore. It was heartening to see that our great party approved and adopted a note in which I had set down my own thinking on this subject.

"The party has now squarely put the responsibility on the Government for the early and effective implementation of the policy decision taken at Bangalore. As a disciplined soldier of the party you lent support to the resolution which was adopted. Even though I know that, in regard to some of the basic issues that arise, you entertain strong reservations and have your own views about the direction as well as the pace of change, you have expressed your views clearly in the Working Committee and previously on other occasions. I have given deep thought to this matter and feel that in all fairness, I should not burden you with this responsibility in your capacity as Finance Minister, but should take it directly upon myself.

"May I say that your continued assistance and association with Government as Deputy Prime Minister will be needed and greatly valued. Detailed arrangements could be discussed later.

"I am advising the President accordingly."

APPENDIX III-B

Text of Mr. Morarji Desai's letter to Mrs. Indira Gandhi dated July 16, 1969.

"I received your letter dated today at 12-45 p.m. If I understand it rightly you seem to have come to the conclusion that although the

resolution on economic policy was adopted unanimously at Bangalore and was indeed moved by me, you cannot count on my support in Government on 'some of the basic issues that arise' or on the direction as well as the pace of some of the changes involved.

"I should have thought that 'in all fairness'—to use your own expression—you should have given your colleagues in the Cabinet an opportunity to know what concretely you wish to be done and to invite their reactions before deciding on whether you should change the sphere of responsibility of any of them.

"At any rate, as far as I am concerned, considering my record of service and loyalty to the Congress Party and the Government I regard it as a matter of ordinary courtesy that you should have discussed your precise misgivings with me before taking the decision that you say you have taken.

"You know me enough to know that my sense of loyalty to the party does not permit me to put my views above the views of the majority where Government decisions are involved and that if I cannot endorse a certain course of action I would not myself want to remain responsible for its implementation. But as it is, there is bound to be speculation whether your decision stems from misgivings about the implementation of the Bangalore resolution on economic policy or something else.

"Nor is it clear to me what my responsibilities as Deputy Prime Minister or as a member of the Cabinet are supposed to be if I am to be relived of responsibility of implementing the resolution on economic policy 'in my capacity as Finance Minister'. You have said that you are advising the President accordingly; but I am left in the dark about what precisely you have advised the President.

Under the circumstances, you will appreciate that without some further clarification from you, I cannot react finally to your letter. In the meanwhile I am naturally considering all possible eventualities.

"P.S. After writing the above, I find from PTI news at 2-44 p.m. that you have already taken the formal step to relieve me of the Finance portfolio. In view of this, I cannot see any point in my continuing as a member of your Cabinet.

APPENDIX III-C

Text of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's letter to Mr. Morarji Desai dated July 16, 1969.

"Thank you for your letter of today's date.

"I am afraid you have completely misunderstood me. I did not suggest anywhere in my letter that I made the change of portfolio because of any 'misgivings' concerning your 'loyalty' either to me or the party. In fact, as I myself stated in my previous letter of today, I knew that as a disciplined soldier of the party, and if I may add, as one of its leading members, you would lend your support to the resolution which was adopted.

"What I said was that having regard to the reservations which you had expressed from time to time in regard to certain aspects of the basic policy questions, I would be saddling you with an unfair burden by requiring you to take the primary and direct charge of their implementation and further that since it was my own note which came to be the basis of the AICC resolution, in all fairness, I should take direct and full responsibility in the matter upon myself.

"I am distressed that you should think of resigning from the Council of Ministers. I sincerely feel that your valuable advice and help is needed not only in the party but in Government. I do hope, therefore, that you will seriously reconsider your decision and agree to continue in Government as Deputy Prime Minister. As I mentioned in my previous letter, we could discuss later the detailed arrangements to be made as a consequence of my taking over the Finance portfolio.

"In the postscript to your letter you express surprise at the announcement made by the President's Secretariat a couple of hours after I wrote to you. I had clearly stated in my previous letter that I was advising the President to give effect to the arrangements I had proposed."

APPENDIX III-D

Text of Mr. Morarji Desai's letter to Mrs. Indira Gandhi dated July 17, 1969.

"I thank you for your letter No. 675-PMO/69 dated July 16, 1969, in which you have asked me to reconsider my decision. I gave several thoughtful hours to this and it has taken me some time to formulate my thoughts before I give you my considered reply. There has thus been some delay and I regret it very much.

"While I am glad you do not doubt my loyalty to the party or to its leader. I am unable to understand the basis on which you have asked me to reconsider my decision to quit Government because your second letter under reply does not say more than what you have stated in your

first. I am, however, pained to see that you doubt my enthusiasm with regard to the implementation of economic programme adopted by the party at Bangalore. I may have expressed different views on a given issue during discussions before a decision was taken on it but once the party or the Cabinet took a decision, I have not only stood by it and defended it whole-heartedly, but when I was called upon to implement it, I have done it without the slightest reservation. This is how I have always functioned in the party and the Government because I believe this is the essence of the functioning of party system in a parliamentary democracy in which every member need not hold the same view on details of a programme but it is open to every member to exercise his right to express his views within the party or within the Cabinet until a decision is taken.

"It is obvious from your letter and from what I hear from certain quarters close to you that you feel that I have not implemented certain decisions with enthusiasm because of my reservations on those issues. I wish you were a little more explicit and spelt out what you have in mind.

"In your note on economic programme read out at the meeting of the Working Committee in Bangalore and later on incorporated in the resolution on the economic policy of the party, you did not suggest outright nationalization straightway. These are your words 'either we can consider the nationalization of the top five or six banks or issue directions that the resources of banks should be reserved to a larger extent for public purposes.' I accepted this under the circumstances as suggested by Shri Chavan in the Working Committee and moved the resolution without reservations. I made it clear in my reply that I have always accepted decisions of the Congress without any reservations. In these circumstances, you were less than fair to me in relieving me of the Finance portfolio with the argument that you did not want to cast on me an unfair burden of implementation of the economic programme of the party. I fail to understand the rationale behind your decision for it gives me an impression that there is something more to it than meets the eye. Guptaji met me this afternoon and told me about his talk with you with regard to me. I was amazed and shocked to hear from him that you told him that I was organizing a party (obviously with a view to oust you from leadership). In one breath you have recognized my loyalty to the party and its leader, in another you gave Guptaji to understand that I was conspiring against you. You know it as well as anybody else that groupism and conspiracy are not in my grain. Guptaji told you this too.

"May I ask whether it was fair that you should have taken a unilateral decision and issued a notification with President's consent without even the courtesy of having had a word with me? Since you recognise me as a disciplined soldier and one of the leaders of the Congress, could not a better consideration have been shown to me? Why was I not called for a discussion before the decision was taken? That would have given me an opportunity to understand what exactly you had in your mind.

"You have always attached highest importance to self respect in life. I would, therefore, like to know from you as to what a self-respecting person should do in these circumstances; or, if I may ask, what you would do in my place under similar circumstances."

APPENDIX III–E

Text of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's letter to Mr. Morarji Desai dated July 19, 1969.

"I received your letter of July 17 the same day. I was distressed that you should have decided to insist on resigning from Government in spite of my urging you to reconsider your decision. Although your letter came the day before yesterday, I could not reply earlier because the thought of accepting your resignation was distasteful to me and I had naturally to give much anxious thought to the matter before I could reply to you.

"Since you wrote to me, we have met and have had a detailed exchange of views in the course of which we talked about many of the points which you have raised. I need not, therefore, deal with all of them in this letter.

"As I tried to explain to you personally as well as in my previous letters, and as I explained also to our other colleagues, there was no question of casting doubts upon your sense of loyalty or discipline. The question involved was not that at all. The question was twofold.

"First, I felt that in view of your own reservations on certain aspect of the economic policies which we have discussed from time to time—(and if I may say so, it is characteristic of you to refer to them yourself)—I would be casting an unfair burden on you if I were to require you to take the primary charge of implementing the decisions that might be required. And secondly, since the subject matter of the Bangalore res-

olution was the note which I had submitted to the party it was even otherwise only fair that I should take this responsibility upon myself.

"It is in these circumstances that I decided to take over the Finance portfolio. Thus only a change of portfolio was involved. You have been one of the consistent and leading defenders of our parliamentary system and I know that you uphold all well-accepted conventions in these matters. When I came to decide upon the change of portfolio, I first wrote to you explaining the decision and I also informed you that I was advising the President accordingly. It was only thereafter, that I wrote to the President.

"I had not thought at all in terms of your dissociation from Government. In fact, I said in the same letter that your presence in Government would be needed and valued and suggested that we discuss detailed arrangements later. But before I could do so, I received your first letter.

"However, I am genuinely sorry that I have failed to persuade you to stay on in Government. I have had the privilege of knowing you for many years. You have been in the forefront of our national political scenes Indeed, you are among the few stalwarts of the party belonging to the previous generation. I can assure you that it will be a wrench to part with you in the Cabinet. I have always valued your advice and shall continue to do so. Since you have reiterated your desire to be relieved of your charge in spite of all I have tried to explain, I am left with no option but to comply with your wishes. I am accordingly advising the President, with the utmost regret, to accept your resignation.

"I need hardly express the sincere hope that although you will no longer be available to us in the Cabinet, I shall continue to have the benefit of your advice and wise counsel in the party."

APPENDIX III-F

Text of Mr. Morarji Desai's letter to Mrs. Indira Gandhi dated July 19, 1969.

"I thank you for your letter of July 19 which I received this afternoon.

"When I met you yesterday we talked at length in an effort to understand the basis of your extraordinary decision to relieve me of the Finance portfolio; I asked you to cite one instance where I have not implemented decisions based on accepted policy of the party and

Government. You did not cite even one such instance. How can you then say that my reservations have stood or are likely to stand in the way of implementation of such decisions? I do claim that I owe it to you and to Government that I should express my views on a given subject before any decision is taken affecting the vital interests of the country. If I have done so before decisions are taken I have never done that after. However you have not chosen to substantiate your imputations.

"You have stated that you would like to take the primary responsibility of implementation of the resolution on economic policy passed by the AICC at Bangalore because it was based on your note. We have adopted many resolutions on the basis of many notes submitted by individual members of the Working Committee but no one has claimed that a particular resolution was his or her individual resolution. I therefore fail to understand when you talk in terms of your note and your resolution as if it disentitles everybody else from assisting in the implementation of it.

"You will recollect what you told Guptaji before he met me and conveyed it to me. I asked you about this new political dimension that you have introduced and you protested that what you told Guptaji was not with reference to me but that it applied to others. May I say that I have asked Guptaji again and he emphatically maintains that your statement was with reference to me?

"You have now tried to say that your decision amounts to a change of the portfolio. I don't see the change. For there was no offer of an alternative portfolio which I could consider. Was it really wrong for me to interpret from the manner and substance of your action that you wanted me to resign?

"I thought there was little purpose in our meeting yesterday in view of your efforts to defend your extraordinary decision and also from what our colleagues conveyed to me. But I agreed to meet you because our colleagues desired that I should and also because I owed it to meet you as P.M. when you asked me as I had not ceased to be Dy. P.M. at that time.

"I must say that I felt so touched when you expressed some feelings for me and considered me to be one of the few stalwarts of the last generation and that you value my services to the party and the Government. I am grateful for your feelings. But don't you think this expression of feelings is inconsistent with the wrong that you have done to me in a summary manner? Therefore I have had no choice but to ask you to relieve me. Need I however assure you that I shall continue in

future as I have always done in the past, to serve the country though Congress and be available to the leader for such advice or assistance as I may be called upon to render.

"I have refrained from making any statement so far on this issue. I have been asked that I should release this correspondence so that people may know all that led to this extraordinary decision. I hope you have no objection to the release of this correspondence. Unless I hear from you to the contrary by tomorrow afternoon I shall release it to the Press. I propose to make a statement in the Lok Sabha and am writing separately to the Speaker to allow me to make this statement."

APPENDIX IV

Text of Messrs Jagjivan Ram and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad's letter to Mr. S. Nijalingappa dated August 11, 1969.

"As loyal and devoted Congressmen, we deem it our duty to let you know that considerable confusion exists in the minds of numerous members of our Parliamentary Party regarding the talks that you had on your own initiative, with some of the leaders of the Jana Sangh and Swatantra Party.

"It is claimed that as a direct result of your talks, the Jana Sangh executive has decided to extend support to Shri Sanjiva Reddy. What is agitating the minds of the members of our party is the basis on which you could possibly have had these talks. All kinds of ugly rumours are afloat and the situation has worsened because those whom you have approached and their respective parties have openly demanded the removal of the Prime Minister.

"It is difficult to appreciate the desirability, or indeed the necessity, of these talks by you on a personal level with parties who themselves have an official candidate in the forthcoming Presidential election. Moreover, these parties are wholly opposed to the accepted ideology and policies of the Congress and particularly the nationalisation of banks which they have challenged before the Supreme Court.

"We fear that unless the whole position is fully clarified, and the basis of your talks and their readiness to support Shri Sanjiva Reddy is satisfactorily disclosed, it may have grave repercussions in the Presidential election."

APPENDIX V

Text of Mr. S. Nijalingappa's letter to Messrs Jagjivan Ram and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad dated August 12, 1969.

"I am surprised at the contents of your letter. You met me only yesterday afternoon and on that occasion you never raised the points made in your letter. I do not know how these points have suddenly cropped up.

"Shri N. Sanjiva Reddy is our candidate. Each of us has to work for his success. As in all elections, we have to approach everyone in the electorate—in this case, composed of Members of Parliament and Members of State Legislatures. As per our usual practice, I have been approaching every party for its support and requesting every voter for his vote. This was done in the past by all of us, including the Prime Minister, even when the Opposition had its own candidate in the field. Not to make such an effort would be dereliction of duty. Incidentally all my colleagues in the Parliamentary Board, at its meeting on August 1, had advised me to approach various parties for support.

"All the Opposition parties have often moved motion of no-confidence in our Government. That has not prevented us from seeking their support on national issues.

"I am surprised at certain sentiments in your letter:

'What is agitating the minds of the members of our party is the basis on which you could possibly have had these talks. All kinds of ugly rumours are afloat and the situation has worsened because those whom you have approached and their respective parties have openly demanded removal of the Prime Minister.' I fail to understand the meaning or relevance of these words.

"On two successive occasions, the Prime Minister was elected the Leader of the Congress Party with our support and goodwill. How then can anyone entertain any doubts about mutual faith in the Congress? What do you mean when you say that I am carrying the talks at a personal level ? Are not such talks carried on by you every day with the Opposition leaders for work of the Government and work in the Parliament ? Because the Communist Party issues certain circulars of support to some Congress leaders, should I start doubting the loyalty of these

leaders to our organisation ? I am not accustomed to function on such a level.

"You are among our senior leaders and distinguished colleagues of the Prime Minister and me who have jointly to carry the onerous burden of this country and our party. May I, therefore, request you not to permit baseless confusion to spread, and devote our combined energies for the success of Mr. Sanjiva Reddy."

APPENDIX–VI

Text of Messrs Jagjivan Ram and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad's letter to Mr. S. Nijalingappa dated August 13, 1969.

"Thank you for your letter dated August 12. We regret that your reply leaves all the important questions raised by us unanswered. We have not been told as to how or why you had approached the leaders of the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party when these parties:

(i) Had set up their own candidate against Mr. Sanjiva Reddy;
(ii) Had openly demanded the removal of the Prime Minister;
(iii) Had openly characterised the Prime Minister as a person having Communist leanings;
(iv) Had openly opposed our socialist policics including the nationalisation of banks; and
(v) Had written to the President to withhold consent to the Bank Nationalisation Bill thus seeking to propound a new and extraordinary theory of the powers of the President in respect of a Bill duly passed by Parliament.

"You have also not enlightened us as to why or on what basis after your talks with these two parties they had decided to support Shri Reddy.

"Under these circumstances how was it wrong on our part to inform you as loyal and devoted Congressmen that it was necessary for you to satisfactorily clarify these points to prevent grave repercussions on the forthcoming Presidential election?

"It is clear, however, from the tenor of your letter that you have avoided dealing with or clarifying these vital matters. It has, therefore, become difficult for us to convince our Members in Parliament and the State Legislatures that it is not a matter of conscience for them as to how they should vote in the coming Presidential election. The basis on which Shri Reddy was nominated and the Prime Minister filed his nomination has now completely disappeared in view of the above points which unfortunately still remain unanswered.

"Many of us are now convinced, more than ever, that the future of our socialist policies and our secular democracy as well as all other cherished ideals of the Congress are in grave jeopardy and only the exercise of the right of free vote in the coming Presidential election can avert this danger.

APPENDIX VIII

Text of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's letter to Mr. Nijalingappa dated August 13, 1969.

"I received your letters of August 9 and 12, 1969.

"I am sure you are aware of the feelings of criticism among members of State Legislatures regarding the steps to be taken to make electoral arrangements with the Jana Sangh and Swatantra parties in the forthcoming Presidential election.

"A very large number of members have expressed the view that after these arrangements, the basis on which the party had agreed to the nomination of Shri Sanjiva Reddy has unfortunately disappeared.

I had decided to stand by the decision of the Parliamentary Board and had sponsored the nomination of Shri Sanjiva Reddy. Subsequent developments have, however, rekindled doubts in the minds of many which compelled two of our valued colleagues, members of Parliamentary Board and the Working Committee and Ministers of the Union Cabinet, Shri Jagjivan Ram, and Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad to write to you regarding the manner in which the campaign is being carried on and arrangements are being made.

"Ours is a party forged in struggle. And yet, we were always guided by our ideals even in the face of overwhelming odds.

"Dedication to certain cherished values has been the mainstay of our organisation. Indeed, when some other political parties indulged in unprincipled adjustments, we in the Congress stood firm. It is, therefore, a matter of deep anguish to me that our colleagues and leading members should have been convinced that attempts are now being made at the highest level in the party to compromise with political parties totally opposed to our principles and accepted programmes.

"The eagerness with which parties like the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra have announced their support to Mr. Sanjiva Reddy, despite their own official candidate, lends credence to this conviction.

"Elections are a medium to fight for our values and voting is a process of association with these values. I cannot think of winning elections by clouding principles. I do not therefore think that in these circumstances and for constitutional reasons, it would be right for me to have a whip issued".

APPENDIX VIII

Text of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's letter to Mr. Nijalingappa dated August 13, 1969.

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"Ours is a party forged in struggle. And yet, we were always guided by our ideals even in the face of overwhelming odds.

"Dedication to certain cherished values has been the mainstay of our organisation. Indeed, when some other political parties indulged in unprincipled adjustments, we in the Congress stood firm. It is, therefore, a matter of deep anguish to me that our colleagues and leading members should have been convinced that attempts are now being made at the highest level in the party to compromise with political parties totally opposed to our principles and accepted programmes.

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"Elections are a medium to fight for our values and voting is a process of association with these values. I cannot think of winning elections by clouding principles. I do not therefore think that in these circumstances and for constitutional reasons, it would be right for me to have a whip issued".

APPENDIX IX

Text of Mr. Nijalingappa's letter to Mrs. Indira Gandhi dated August 13, 1969.

"Thank you for your letter of the 13th instant. I am distressed to read your letter. You have voiced your objection against 'the manner in which the campaign is being carried on and arrangements being made'.

"Earlier your refusal to issue an appeal on behalf of Shri Sanjiva Reddy was in deference to a judgement of the Supreme Court. Now suddenly other objections are brought up.

"If you had any doubts about the campaign or about arrangements with other parties, or even over contacts with some parties, why did you not contact me earlier. I was always at your disposal, for a meeting. After all, Shri Sanjiva Reddy is not just my candidate but the candidate of all of us.

"May I enquire what is wrong with the campaign and what arrangements are being made? If you felt that the party principles were being compromised, surely you could have talked to me earlier.

"I have sought the support of all the voters for our candidate. It is mischievous to talk about arrangements with the Jana Sangh and Swatantra parties. You very well know that there are and there can be no arrangements with them beyond seeking their as all other voters support for our candidate. I feel deeply pained because deliberately and wantonly an atmosphere of suspicion and doubt has been created, a great deal of smoke has been generated without a speck of fire anywhere. Governmental power, history warns us, has this ability when the rulers choose to exercise it.

"You refer to the strong feelings among Congressmen particularly members of Parliament. I have known of Ministers being mobilised and they are going round the members to enlist their support in terms of indignation they never knew before.

"It is surprising that without any consultations with me you should level the charge that 'attempts are now being made and at the highest level in the party to compromise with political parties totally opposed to our principles and accepted programmes.' You have referred here

to attempts being made at the highest level in the party, that is obviously by me. May I categorically repudiate the allegation? It is unworthy of those who make it, it is unworthy of me to comment upon. Apart from my responsibility as the President of the Congress, my record as a public man would nail the lie to the counter.

"Now that you know of my categorical repudiation of baseless doubts and fanciful fears, may I appeal to you to help me in dispersing the miasma of misunderstanding and in assuring Shri Sanjiva Reddy's election. I once again request you to issue a whip to our members in Parliament".

APPENDIX X

Text of Mr. Nijalingappa's letter to Messrs Jagjivan Ram and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad dated August 13, 1969.

"Thank you for your letter of the 12th instant. You must have received the brief reply that I sent to you earlier in the day. In your letter you write, 'many of us are now convinced, more than ever, that the future of our socialist policies and our secular democracy as well as all other cherished ideals of the Congress are in grave jeopardy and only the exercise of the right of free vote in the coming Presidential election can avert this danger'.

"Does this mean that the defeat of the Congress candidate in the Presidential election, in your opinion, is the one way to save the ideals of the Congress? How does Shri Sanjiva Reddy's defeat help to dispel the threats you entertain?

"The ideals of the Congress have been evolved by millions of Congressmen inspired by a galaxy of leaders and only determined indiscipline can put them in jeopardy. As late as the Bangalore session of the AICC that supreme body in the organisation approved a programme of economic and social transformation. How have threats to these ideals suddenly emerged?

"I have already told you that it was my duty, and I had been asked, to approach every voter in the President's election for his support. Accordingly, I have met or written to leaders as well as members of every party in Parliament and State legislatures. Precisely the same thing was done by the Prime Minister at the time of election of Dr. Zakir Husain. Shri Kamaraj, the then Congress President, had approached the voters. If I have had to exert more than Shri Kamaraj had to, it is because from the beginning the Prime Minister, guided, mistakenly in my opinion, by a judgement of the Supreme Court has kept aloof from her share of efforts.

"What the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party stand for is nothing new to us. We are equally aware of what other Opposition parties stand and work for. But so long as the parties are legally functioning and are represented in the legislatures, it becomes necessary to seek their co-operation in elections that involve members of legislatures. It

was but natural that the Prime Minister had recently to hold discussions with these two very parties before bringing up her proposal for the Vice-Presidentship.

"You also mention in your letter 'the basis on which Shri Reddy was nominated and the Prime Minister filed his nomination has now completely disappeared'. Is this the way one can function in public life? Can other decisions, collectively arrived at, unilaterally disappear in this manner? Do you realise the consequences of your strange thesis? You claim to seek enlightenment from me, but I am unable even to understand what precisely you have in mind.

"You write, 'you have also not enlightened us as to why or on what basis after your talks with these two parties they had decided to support Shri Reddy'. Surely, there is no mystery about this. I pressed for the claims of our candidate and the positions taken up by two parties are not unknown to you. Is there a suggestion of any political collusion between me and these parties? Are discussions to descend to this unworthy level? I at least am accustomed to exchange innuendoes.

APPENDIX XI

Text of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's letter to Mr. Nijalingappa dated August 15, 1969.

"I am sorry that your letter of August 13 has not dealt with the points which I had raised in my last letter, nor have the misgivings been removed from the minds of a large number of Congressmen regarding the discussions you have had with some political parties, like the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra, which are totally opposed to the accepted policies of the Congress.

"You will recollect that since the vacancy for the office of President arose, I had been of the view that a person who was respected by and broadly acceptable to all political parties should be chosen to fill this high office. It was with this end in view that I had approached the leaders of various political parties to ascertain their opinion without projecting any particular person myself and to see if there could be a general agreement on any name which would also be acceptable to us.

"You are also aware that the Congress Party has generally attempted to take decisions by evolving a consensus rather than by forcing decisions by vote. That is how we have been able to keep the different sections of the party together and to forge a common bond. This has been our strength.

"Unfortunately, this procedure was abandoned in Bangalore. A decision was forced upon us in the Parliamentary Board by sudden recourse to voting on a matter of such vital importance. This tragic departure was bound to bring difficulties in its wake. I had my apprehensions. I tried to caution you and other friends. There was nothing personal about it. It was a matter of our future functioning, consistent with our party traditions. Obviously, I did not succeed in persuading you, and my worst fears are coming true. Although we have a clear majority, you have sought support from other political parties—even those diametrically opposed to all our ideals and programmes.

"You have not denied this and have received their enthusiastic support. Many colleagues and I have been asking you for the basis on which you have sought and received this support. It is difficult for anyone to believe that these parties, formed in opposition to the basic

principles of the Congress Party, would have extended their support to us for the sake of our policies. This fundamental question remains unanswered.

"Instead of dispelling this doubt and enlightening us about your talks with the leaders of the other parties and any understandings which you might have reached with them to get their support, you have sought to assure me that you were not going to topple my Government but would allow me to continue as Prime Minister until 1972. I must record a strong protest at this attempt to inject power politics into a discussion involving fundamental issues.

"I need no personal assurances, nor do I seek to retain my office at all cost. But we should like to have answers to the basic questions which have been posed.

"It is in these circumstances that a large number of our members of Parliament and of State Legislatures are asking for the right of free vote. These are our colleagues, members of the party, whose record of service, loyalty and adherence to the principles of the party cannot be questioned. As a democratic party, the Congress can ill-afford to ignore this. Any attempt to isolate this demand from the context in which it has been made, can lead to a serious division in the party. We must now get back to our tried methods of functioning. Giving the option to the members in the extraordinary situation to act, according to the dictates of their conscience, would rejuvenate the party, restore confidence and strengthen unity.

"For some years now, we have been highlighting our differences by airing them in public. Some members—even those highly placed in the party—have been making statements in the open against the accepted policies and programmes of the party. This has gone on unchecked. I certainly believe in unity, but my efforts have not been reciprocated by all. Let us now attempt to clear the air. The Congress cannot be merely a machinery for winning the election of candidates chosen by a small group, and by making alliances divorced from policies. It has to be a live political organisation of the masses, pulsating with activity at every level. This can be brought about only by our adherence to the ideals and programmes of the party."

APPENDIX XII

Text of Mr. Nijalingappa's letter to Mrs. Indira Gandhi dated August 16, 1969.

"Thank you for your letter of August 15 delivered to me near midnight.

"Your letter compels me to set the record straight. On the last occasion, when Dr. Zakir Husain was selected as the Congress candidate for the Presidentship, the Parliamentary Board has ascertained its opinion in the same manner as on this occasion. Shri Sanjiva Reddy as Speaker had evoked universal approbation and goodwill. I cannot think of another person enjoying general respect and acceptance in a larger measure than Shri Sanjiva Reddy. It is significant that at the very meeting that finalised Shri Sanjiva Reddy's candidature you had threatened us with serious consequences. The sequence of events is merely the unfolding of that threat.

"On August 1, the Parliamentary Board agreed that I might contact all parties and voters and seek their support for our candidate. At the meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party held on August 5, I had reported about my talks with the Opposition parties. Your comment then had been that 'All that needed to be said on the subject has been said by the President'. You had also said the matter of Presidential candidate had been closed at Bangalore.

"It is tiresome to answer the same points again and again. Let me repeat once for ever that there is no, and can be no, understanding with the Jana Sangh or the Swatantra Party for seeking their support for our candidate.

"Your demand for a free vote is in fact a demand for the right to vote for Shri V.V. Giri—a candidate nominated by the Communists and communalists. History does not record of an instance where a Prime Minister, after proposing her party's candidate, not only works against him, but proclaims her support for the candidate of the Opposition. If the tragic effect was not staring us, I would have thought of it to be a tale from Alice in Wonderland.

"I have sought to inform and enlighten all concerned about my talks with the leaders of other parties and the limited understanding for

support to our candidate sought by me. Leaders of some of the Opposition parties have endorsed my statements. I had to refer to your continuance as Prime Minister till 1972, not because I wanted to inject power politics, but because you had repeatedly hinted that there were efforts afoot to topple you and that your senior colleagues were conspiring against you.

"I regret that the nostrum of rejuvenation of the Congress that you offer—of letting our members vote according to each one's conscience, which in effect means that with the full pressure of your power and influence, they vote for Shri Giri—is wholly unacceptable to me.

"I have no doubt that our colleagues all over the country, who have given their all to build this great organisation, will not accept this tonic of rejuvenation.

"It hurts me that you should have deemed it proper deliberately to spread confusion and misunderstanding, impugn my conduct without any basis whatsoever and put serious obstacles in the path of our candidate.

"Your long letter full of characteristic statements, calculated to mislead the members, has been sent to me at midnight, only a few hours before the poll.

"I once again invite you to pause and ponder on the perilous course you are following."

APPENDIX XIII-A

Text of the letter written by Mrs. Indira Gandhi and five Working Committee Members to Mr. Nijalingappa dated October 9, 1969.

"On August 25, the Working Committee after reviewing the political situation passed a resolution calling upon all Congressmen to create an atmosphere of unity in the organisation. There have been complaints that the resolution was not being observed in its letter and spirit by many important Congress leaders.

"The President's arbitrary order removing Shri C. Subramaniam from the Working Committee and Shri Kamalapati Tripathi, Shri Kakani Venkataratnam and some others from various offices in the organisation on the basis of some resolutions passed two decades ago will aggravate the situation making the implementation of the Unity Resolution more difficult. The Parliamentary Board met on the 7th and these matters could have been mentioned there or could have been kept pending consideration by the Working Committee which has been convened to meet later this month.

"The action of the President is bound to have serious political repercussions and should, therefore, be considered by the Working Committee at an early date.

"We, therefore, request the Working Committee which has been convened to meet on the 30th may be called to meet around the 15th. In the meanwhile, orders issued by the President should be kept in abeyance.

"We feel it is necessary also to have an early All-India Congress Committee meeting to consider the entire political situation. The President may kindly take steps to convene a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee before November 15."

APPENDIX XIII-B

Text of Mr. Nijalingappa's letter to Mrs. Indira Gandhi and other Members of the Congress Working Committee dated October 9, 1969.

"I am pained to receive the communication sent by you and five of our colleagues of the Working Committee to day. You have stated that I have arbitrarily ordered removal of Shri C. Subramaniam from the Working Committee. I wish you had checked this matter with me be-

fore coming to this conclusion and allowing it to be broadcast. I have sent no communication to Shri Subramaniam. I have never been in the habit of working arbitrarily. Such charges should not be loosely levelled by responsible colleagues.

"You are not unaware of the Congress constitution which demands that a member of the Working Committee is to be a member of the All-India Congress Committee. In the case of Shri Subramaniam, he was an ex-officio member of the All-India Congress Committee in view of his being President of the Tamil Nadu Pradesh Congress Committee. Now that he has ceased to be the President of the Tamil Nadu Pradesh Congress Committee, the position needs to be gone into. I was intending to write to Shri Subramaniam on this point. Not to have written to him about it and (not to have) sought his consultation on it would be arbitrary, ignoring and even violation of the Congress constitution. Does devotion to unity demand that the Congress constitution should be ignored?

"From Andhra Pradesh I have received letters that the P.C.C. President and the Secretary have joined the State Government but no arrangements have been made to elect their successors in accordance with the resolution of the Working Committee.

"Shri Kamalapati Tripathi has resigned long back from the Presidentship of the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee. A meeting of the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee to elect a fresh incumbent to the office was called and adjourned. It was therefore necessary for me to remind the P.C.C.s, in the usual course.

"It is surprising and painful to find you commenting that such communications sent to the P.C.C.s, to quote your words 'on the basis of some resolutions passed two decades ago', will aggravate the situation making implementation of the Unity Resolution more difficult.

"I thought the resolutions of the Congress are binding on us until they are either revised or rescinded, particularly the resolutions governing the procedure and functioning of the party.

"Is it your thesis that lapse of some time automatically erases decisions taken? Will arbitrary functioning on my part to suit the wishes of any party help implementation of unity? As no action has been taken by me which need have caused the concern you have shown in your communication I presume that there is no need to alter the programme already decided upon for the meeting of the Working Committee and for it to decide the date of meeting of the All-India Congress Committee.

"What new developments you have in mind that necessitates urgent consideration of entire political situation is not clear to me."

APPENDIX XIV-A

Text of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's letter to Mr. M.S. Gurupadaswamy dated October 14, 1969.

"After much thought and consideration, I have decided to request you to let me have your resignation from the Council of Ministers. This will enable me in due course to bring about certain changes which are necessary for a more cohesive and purposive direction of work of the Council of Ministers. Even though you will not for the time being carry the burden of ministerial responsibility, it is my earnest hope that you will devote your time, energies and considerable talent in promoting the interests, programmes and policies of the Government and of our party. In performance of this important task, you can always count on my support and good wishes.

"I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for your assistance."

APPENDIX XIV-B

Text of Mr. M.S. Gurupadaswamy's letter to Mrs. Indira Gandhi dated October 15, 1969.

"Thank you for your letter of 14th instant. You have asked for my resignation from the Council of Ministers.

"I am grateful to you for your kind words about me. I am happy to know that you are proposing to make your Government cohesive and purposeful. To the best of my knowledge I was never an obstacle in achieving cohesiveness and purposefulness. You never even indicated that.

"I was entrusted by you with a department that has intimate relations with the life of the rural people. I repeatedly sought your support to make community development meaningful to the rural people. I had also brought before you various schemes and projects to assist rural youth, and to give a new momentum to the co-operative movement. But I failed to evoke your interest and enlist your powerful support. For the majority of the people in the villages the core of socialism,

as they have understood it, lies in benefits drawn from community development, panchayati raj and co-operation. And they have only, if properly organised, the power to change economic and social structure.

"Your uniform lukewarmness towards my proposal for adequate finances and for developing extensively rural works to provide employment to accelerate rural development made it impossible to achieve the results we were capable to provide. My endeavours at purposiveness were often frustrated by loss of your interest. If belatedly it is proposed to look into and look after the many schemes drawn up by the department, my exit from it will appear worthwhile.

"Events alone will show whether ejecting socialists from the Government is the best way to promote socialism."

APPENDIX XV-A

Text of Mr. Nijalingappa's letter to Mrs. Indira Gandhi dated October 28, 1969.

"I wrote to you on October 9 in answer to the letter that you and five other colleagues wrote to me demanding an early meeting of the Working Committee and the All-India Congress Committee to consider my 'arbitrary orders' and the entire political situation. My immediate concern in that letter was to tell you that I had passed no 'arbitrary orders' for the removal of Shri Subramaniam or any one else and to deny your charge that my arbitrary actions were 'making the implementation of the Unity Resolution more difficult.'

"But I must confess that your letter of the 8th came to me as a great shock. As has become usual with the letters that you and your close associates write to me, the contents of this letter too appeared in the Press before your letter reached me. I cannot readily recall another occasion in the long history of the Indian National Congress when members of the Working Committee wrote a letter of this kind to the President of the Congress and accused him of acting against the interests of the organisation. Nor can I recall other occasions on which members of the Working Committee continued to be members of the Working Committee and carried on a campaign of vilification against the President and took the initiative in demanding an AICC session to consider the actions of the President.

"In the past, even in the face of grave differences on policy, the members of the Working Committee have preserved a spirit of camaraderie and that is how the Working Committee earned the reputation of being the High Command and endeared itself to the workers of the organisation by setting an example of solidarity, loyalty and mutual respect.

"The action that you and the other colleagues have taken is, therefore, a sad and unprecedented departure from the traditions of democratic fairplay and comradeship that have helped to preserve the unity of the Congress. You have ignored the basic demands of courtesy and justice and made grave allegations against me on the basis of hearsay or suspicion without even caring to verify facts from me. Nor is this the

first occasion on which you have considered it unnecessary to extend this elementary courtesy to the President of the Congress.

"You will remember that even though I had repeatedly suggested to you in May, June and early July that we should decide on the Congress candidate for the Presidentship you replied that we should postpone the decision since there was no hurry. And did not in fact mention any name to me till two hours before we met in the Parliamentary Board to decide on the candidate on July 12.

"You will recall that at the crucial hour of the recent Presidential election, you and Shri Jagjivan Ram and Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad came out with a public allegation that I had entered into a secret understanding with the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party. At that time too, you did not even care to call me or talk to me to ascertain the truth before mounting a campaign against me and using the story as a ruse to sabotage the election of the Congress candidate. Shri Jagjivan Ram and Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad had met me earlier on the day that they wrote to me making this allegation and yet they had mentioned nothing about it even when I appealed to them to work for the Congress candidate.

"Subsequently, when the story that you circulated had already done irreparable damage to the Congress and its candidate, and when you were asked to prove your allegations in the Working Committee, you admitted that you had no evidence and the story was untenable. And yet, you did not express regret for the defeat of the Congress candidate or the way in which you had encouraged and sanctified indiscipline on the basis of a handy 'untenable' story. In fact, there were many reports in the Press that you accepted congratulations on the victory of Shri Giri and hailed Shri Giri's victory as the victory of what you stood for.

"I must confess that I have found it difficult to understand all this in terms of the accepted canons of conduct in a democratic party or in a parliamentary democracy. I have no doubt that the vast majority of Congressmen and lovers of democracy in our country have been baffled and distressed by your reluctance to accept the decision of the Parliamentary Board; your wrath at being outvoted and your references to the grave 'consequences that will follow'; your peremptory dismissal of Shri Morarji Desai which could only be understood as one of the grave consequences that you foretold; your repeated refusal to issue a whip to the members of the Congress Parliamentary Party or even appeal to the electors in spite of the moral duty cast on you as leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party and the repeated requests that I

and the executive committee of the Parliamentary Party made to you; your support to the allegations made by Shri Jagjivan Ram and Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad; your contention that the "untenable' story had 'removed the basis' of the candidature of the Congress nominee; and your support to the demand for a 'free vote' or 'conscience vote' knowing fully well that this was to be a vote for a candidate of the Communist Party and the Muslim League and that such indiscipline would only lead to the defeat of the Congress candidate and the eventual disintegration of the party.

"You know very well that no political organisation can exist if it permits or encourages attitudes and actions that undermine its integrity. The policies and programmes of a democratic party are determined by free and frank discussion and on the basis of the views expressed by the majority. The constitution of the party provides for organs to determine policy and select candidates. Members of the party accept the obligation to be loyal to the policies of the party and to vote and work for candidates chosen by the competent organs of the party.

"If any member or group of members denounces policies that have been decided upon or refuses to vote for candidates who have been chosen on the ground that they do not agree with the policy or approve of the person the organisation loses its integrity and identity and its effectiveness as an instrument for political action in a parliamentary democracy.

"It develops a split personality and loses the confidence of the people. Voters cannot be sure of the policies of such an organisation. The organisation itself cannot be sure that its policies will be implemented. The organisation cannot be sure that its candidates will be elected. If the party is in Government, the Government cannot be sure of the support of the members of the party. Such a Government will have to work in perpetual uncertainty about its very existence.

"It is clear that parliamentary democracy cannot function if parties get infected by such a virus. What makes parliamentary democracy possible, reliable and effective is the discipline that binds the members of a party and invests the party with an identity and definiteness. If this discipline disappears, parties and the parliamentary democracy itself are bound to disintegrate.

"I had thought that this lesson had been learnt after the defeat of the Congress candidate for presidentship. It is clear that unity can be maintained only on the basis of a disciplined acceptance of the decisions of bodies competent to decide on policies and candidates. The Unity Resolution had accepted this axiom and urged the need for unity,

pointing out that both the parliamentary wing and the organisational wing had their respective spheres of responsibility within which they had to work for the common interests of the organisation. I have no doubt in my mind that I have scrupulously adhered to the letter and spirit of this resolution, cautioning that the past should not be a precedent, exhorting for a discipline and unity, and asking for strict adherence to policies, procedures and discipline in the organisational and legislative wings.

"I was, therefore, surprised to receive your letter accusing me of acting against the spirit of the Unity Resolution. It appears to me that you have made this allegation forgetting how the need for the Unity Resolution arose and how you and some of those who have signed the letter have been speaking and functioning since the Bangalore session of the AICC before and after the Unity Resolution.

"Your speeches and actions ever since the Bangalore session of the AICC have made me wonder what your attitude to the organisation or the party is. In your speeches you often refer to the special responsibilities of the Prime Minister. No one denies these. But in a democracy the Prime Minister is not a 'Swayambhu'. It cannot be forgotten that the Prime Minister is the elected leader of the Parliamentary Party which consists of persons who in turn have been elected as the party's nominees.

"It is the party's manifesto that is placed before the people. It is the party's workers who campaign, canvass and get the votes polled and the party will continue and has to continue to function even if it fails to secure a majority. The relation between the legislative wing and the organisation cannot, therefore, be formulated on the assumption that the party will always be in power.

"Nor can one take the view that once the party gets a majority in the House and a Prime Minister is chosen, the necessity for the organisation disappears and the democratic functions of the organs of the party to determine and review policy and to nominate candidates for elections lapse. And all that the party has to do thereafter is to give its imprimatur to what the Prime Minister says and to glorify the leader. Such an attitude is clearly inconsistent with democracy. In a democracy no one can take away the right of party to formulate policy or even to change the leader.

"But your speeches and actions seem to reflect an extraordinary attitude to the role and rights of the organisation. Though the party adopts a candidate, you seem to think that you are free to work against

the candidate of the party if you do not like the choice of the party. Though the party adopts resolutions and programmes you seem to feel that you are only bound to accept and implement what appeals to you. Even in the case of what you accept from the party's programme (like the 10-point programme or the decision on assuring a basic minimum by 1975), you seem to be able to convince yourself that what you have done has not been the result of the party's thinking but the result of your personal intuition or imagination.

"You seem to relish the propaganda that your close associates carry on, ascribing the authorship of these measures to you, and ignoring the role of the party. If anyone points out that the party has all along been demanding what you have done, you seem to consider it an attempt to denigrate or belittle you. Though you are the head of the administration clothed with full powers to implement the programmes and fulfil the promises of the party you seem to think that it is the organisation that has to be blamed for tardiness of implementation.

"You are uneasy when the organisation or even the organs of the Parliamentary Party want to review the policies or actions of the administration. You give the impression that you will be happy if the role of the organisation can be abridged in formulating policy, reviewing administrative action, and setting up candidates in elections. There are many occasions on which you have shown your disinclination to detailed discussions of policy in the Working Committee and dealt peremptorily with the desires of the executive committee of the Parliamentary Party to discuss matters which definitely fall within their sphere of competence and responsibility.

"Your recent letters makes me wonder whether you grant the President of the organisation the right to enforce the constitutional provisions of the organisation. If the application of rules and resolutions affect those in whom you are interested, your attitude seems to be that the candidates that the party sets up for elections should be persons of your liking and the rules of the organisation should be applied when it suits your interests in certain individuals and groups and ignored when that is in the interest of individuals and groups you support.

"You often say that you are against groups and you say that there is a Syndicate that functions as a group and works against you and your 'progressive' policies. I do not know who in your opinion constitutes the Syndicate. But I know that the Press often uses the term to refer to those who worked for the election of Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri and later for your election in 1965 and 1967. Shri Morarji Desai certainly was

not part of that group on all the three occasions. It was he who had to be persuaded to withdraw, or be defeated, to enable Shastriji and you to win. At that time, you did not find the group or Syndicate reactionary. You did not think that their position in the organisation was based on the bogus primary membership that they controlled. Nor did you think they were a handful of people who were arrogating to themselves the right to choose the party's nominee for the high office. You knew very well that it was their efforts that led to your election as the leader of the Parliamentary Party.

"Now you say that they are a reactionary 'coterie' that wants to usurp the rights of the organisation. You say that the people in the 'Syndicate' are against your 'progressive' policies, that they are denigrating you, and belittling the office of the Prime Minister.

"In some of the speeches that you delivered after the nationalisation of banks you are reported to have said that some of the old leadership were against your progressive policies especially bank nationalisation since they were with the capitalists. The papers quoted you as saying that you know the poor and you would always be with the poor. You do not seem to have considered it necessary to say that the Congress has always stood for the poor and the Congress would always stand with and for the poor. You do not say that the Congress has been for the nationalisation of banks; the impression that one gathers from your speeches is that you, in your concern for the poor, lighted on the idea of nationalisation. You know that many leaders of the Congress, including some of those who are described as members of the Syndicate demanded nationalisation of banks years before you sent your note to the AICC at Bangalore. In fact, it was Shri Kamaraj, Shri Chavan, Shri Atulya Ghosh and others who advocated bank nationalisation much before your note.

"Even in this note, you only contemplated bank nationalisation as an alternative that would have to be considered if social control did not succeed. Shri Asoka Mehta recently issued a statement recalling the attitude that you had taken on this question in previous discussions in the Cabinet and the Working Committee. Yet nationalisation is now painted as a stroke of your genius and it is made to look as though others were against it since they were reactionary, and you have carried it through in spite of their opposition and manoeuvres. The facts are quite different and the circumstances under which you took the step are too well known to need recounting or comment. But the picture that you have been painting has perhaps been found useful to build up

your image as 'leader of the progressive forces' and to mount a campaign against all those whom you want to be out of the way.

"You seem to have made personal loyalty to you the test of loyalty to the Congress and the country. All those who glorify you are progressives. Those who are loyal to the organisation and its policies, but are not willing to accept the position that you should have the sole right to determine policy and candidates, those who feel that in a democracy the organs of the party should take decision on the basis of free and frank discussions and no one should claim a vote are considered reactionary and disloyal.

"The powerful medium of the radio and the influence of the Government on the Press are used to paint them as reactionary. They are scrupulously kept out of positions (like delegations) to which the Government can nominate them and are eased out of positions in the name of 'cohesiveness' and 'purposiveness'. The baits and threats that the Government can use are being used freely and openly to secure regimentation and personal loyalty. All this creates the impression that in our scheme of things there is no place in the party or Government for anyone who differs even slightly from your personal views and likes and dislikes.

"You say you are against groups. But even the recent letter that you sent me was signed by six members of the Working Committee, all of whom with a solitary exception are persons who stood for a 'free vote'. Ministers of your Cabinet (Council of Ministers) are going round the country exhorting and influencing and inducing members of the AICC and members of Parliament to sign statements and requisitions encouraging the emergence of factions that qualify to be regarded as 'loyal', factions whose loyalty to you as an individual is greater than their loyalty to the democratic functioning of the party factions that denigrate and campaign against elected office-bearers whom you and your admirers consider undesirable, or threaten the stability of Congress Ministries if the Chief Ministers happen to be persons whom you dislike and a general impression is being created that you have the patronage that your office commands to reward the storm troopers of this group.

"An impression is being created that you do not even mind ignoring the duly constituted PCC in a State and functioning through a group of individuals that enjoys your confidence, that you do not mind taking the support of some of the Opposition parties that are running Governments in some States to bolster your individual position even if this results in weakening and demoralising the units of our organis-

ation in these States. The case with which the assistance of the Communist Party, the Muslim League and the DMK was used to defeat the Congress candidate for the Presidentship has strengthened this impression.

"It appears that everything is permissible and pardonable to those who are recognised supporters of the personality cult that is threatening democracy in the organisation. They may have committed serious breaches of our laws like the income-tax laws. They may not have submitted the declaration of their assets to the AICC as the rules of the party demand. They may have collected large amounts of money from various sources in the name of the party and not informed the party and accounted for them to the party.

"What distresses me most and augurs ill for Congress and the country is the pattern that peeps out from these attitudes and actions. I have my apprehension that this pattern may lead us to one-man rule in the organisation and Government and not to the strengthening of democratic socialism.

"It has not been easy for me to write all this to you. It has taken me many hours and days of anxious thinking to come to the conclusion that I should put all these thoughts and fears of mine before you. But I owe a duty to the high office that I hold in the Congress. I cannot abdicate this duty. As President of the Congress it is my duty to keep a watch on attitudes and actions that may threaten the unity of the Congress and endanger the democratic functioning of the organisation. It is my duty to point out to these dangers and appeal 'to every Congressman to rise above attitudes that may destroy the unity of the organisation and its effectiveness as an instrument for the preservation of democracy and the achievement of socialism. It is in that spirit that I have written this letter and I hope you will read it in the same spirit.

"I believe that even now it is possible to undo the mischief that has been done, forge unity and strengthen the Congress for the sake of the country. I am awaiting your reaction.

"I am not releasing this letter to the Press."

APPENDIX XV-B

Text of Mr. Nijalingappa's letter to Mrs. Indira Gandhi dated November 3, 1969.

"I wrote to you on October 28, to put before you my fears and apprehensions about your attitudes and actions since the Bangalore

session of the AICC. I attempted to draw your attention to the grave threats that your actions were posing to the unity of the Congress organisation and the traditions of democracy that we want to build up in the country. I appealed to you to turn back from the brink to which you had led yourself and renounce the ways of intrigue and disruption.

"I had hoped that you would not turn a deaf ear to the voice of conscience. I had hoped that you would not allow your conduct to sully the traditions of the great Indian National Congress that millions of our countrymen have built up through suffering and sacrifice, traditions that still thrill every genuine Congressman.

"But I regret that you have not cared to respond to my appeal. You have not found time to reply or talk to me. But you have taken the unprecedented step of leading a boycott of the meeting of the duly constituted Working Committee of the Indian National Congress and organising a meeting of some members of the Working Committee at your residence at the very hour set for the meeting of the Working Committee.

"The Press reports that the members who met under your leadership passed a resolution characterising some of my actions as unconstitutional and backing the move for a requisition to remove me from the presidentship of the Congress and summoning a 'special session of the AICC' to meet in Delhi on November 22 and 23. This is an unpardonable act of gross indiscipline, a flagrant violation of the constitution of the Congress, calculated to disrupt the unity of the organisation.

"Am I to understand that this is your reply to my appeal for a return to the ways of reason, discipline and democracy? I am afraid the action that you have taken may lead to far-reaching consequences. It has, therefore, become necessary for me to let Congressmen know what is in danger and who is endangering the unity, ideals and policies of our great organisation. All of us are accountable to the public whom we seek to serve, and I feel that the time has, therefore, come for us to acquaint the public with our points of view. I am, therefore, releasing my letter of October 28 along with this letter to the Press."

APPENDIX XV-C

Text of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's letter to Mr. Nijalingappa dated November 4, 1969.

"I have just received your letter dated November 3, 1969 where

you have mentioned that you are releasing your letter to me dated 28th October, 1969.

"Your letter of the 28th was received on 29th October, 1969, but in view of the large number of issues which you had raised in that letter, I felt it necessary to prepare a reply which would cover them in detail. While I was doing this, I was suddenly informed on the 31st October that you had written to Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad intimating him that you were removing him from his membership of the Working Committee. At the same time you also sent a letter to Shri Subramaniam informing him that his membership in the Working Committee had lapsed. I can only comment, at this stage, that this is rather a strange way of implementing the appeal in your letter dated 28th October to Congressmen 'to rise above attitudes that may destroy the unity of the organisation and its effectiveness as an instrument for the preservation of democracy and the achievement of socialism.'

"I think it is my duty first to deal with the patent illegality of the actions you have taken against Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad and Shri Subramaniam. You are aware that the Working Committee of the Congress is formed of 20 members of whom seven members are to be elected by the All-India Congress Committee and the rest to be appointed by the President. Under Article 5 of the constitution the term of every member of a Congress Committee shall ordinarily be two years. Thus in terms of these two Articles, once a person becomes a member of the Working Committee whether through appointment by the President or through election by the All-India Congress Committee, his term ordinarily would be two years.

"There is, however, no provision in the constitution or the rules for removing any person from the membership of the Working Committee.

"The contention in your letter, that since the President has appointed a particular member to the Working Committee, he has the right to remove him if he loses confidence in that member is not in accordance with the constitution or the rules. It may be relevant also to refer to the power of the President to remove office-bearers which is defined in the rules. Under the appropriate rule, the President of any Congress Committee may remove any of its office-bearers, appointed by him, if he is satisfied that he is not discharging his duties to the President's satisfaction. This power, however, does not extend to the removal of persons, appointed or nominated to the Committee and exclusively covers only office-bearers appointed by him. It is also worth noting that even when such an office-bearer has to be removed, due opportunity

has to be given to him to explain his position before any action is taken against him.

"All these provisions of the constitution of the Congress have been flouted by you. Apart from these objections to your obviously illegal action, it is amazing that while speaking of unity, you should take action which displays your disregard for the unity of the organisation.

"I should also like to deal with an argument which is being freely canvassed today. It is said that just as the Prime Minister has the undoubted power to remove any member of the Council of Ministers, so also the President of the Congress has the power to remove any member appointed by him to the Working Committee. The powers of the Prime Minister are governed by the Constitution of India, whereas the powers of the President of the Congress are governed by the constitution of the Congress and these constitutions are obviously made for very different purposes, one for the proper functioning of the Executive which governs the country and is responsible to Parliament, and the other for the proper functioning of the leadership of a political party. To attempt to base an argument on such an analogy is ridiculous.

"Immediately after these actions against Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad and Shri Subramaniam, you have once more, illegally and in violation of the constitution of the Congress, removed Dr. Sankar Dayal Sharma from his membership of the Working Committee. He naturally resigned his post of Secretary, because you requested him to do so.

"But he was appointed a member of the Committee some months before he took up the post of Secretary and his appointment as a member of the Committee has nothing to do with his being an office-bearer. It is extraordinary that when he acceded to your request to resign from his post as office-bearer, you should respond with an order removing him from his position as a member of the Committee.

"All these actions only go to show that in order to serve your own purpose, you are quite prepared to flout the provisions of the constitution of the Congress and arbitrarily remove persons who are members of the highest policy-making body of the party.

"It was these actions that made me feel that no useful purpose would be served by writing a long reply to your letter. However, since you have released your letter to the Press, I think I should put on record my reply to the more important points which you have raised.

"The various issues arising out of the Presidential election were fully discussed by the Working Committee in all its aspects and what is now called the Unity Resolution was passed on the 25th of August and it

is purposeless to traverse all the ground over again. I shall however briefly refer to some of the incorrect statements that you have made. Your statement in para 4 of your letter is not true. I did not want postponement of the decision regarding a candidate for the office of President, nor did I have a candidate of my own. I was having repeated consultations and was asking for a number of names so that a consensus might be arrived at. It was unfortunate that the Parliamentary Board was compelled to take a snap decision by a majority vote without any discussion. This is hardly the manner in which major decisions should be taken in a responsible party, which should function in a mature way.

"You insinuate in para 6 of your letter that those who pleaded for a free vote were collaborating with the Communist Party and the Muslim League as Shri Giri was the candidate put up by them. Shri Giri contested as an Independent candidate and if he was able to win the support of many parties, that cannot be put against me and my colleagues.

"You have made a reference to the Unity Resolution and your strict adherence to it in letter and spirit. This is not the general impression that the country has of your attitude. Senior Working Committee members were carrying on a vilification campaign against me and some others who were supporting me, ignoring the Unity Resolution. You did not choose to take any action to stop this. On the other hand, you gave the impression of collaborating with them. It will be easy to see from the Press which persons have violated the Unity Resolution. Neither I nor any other responsible person has said a word against any individual.

"Your letter to the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee, Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar Pradesh Congress Committees, again taking what is obviously illegal action against Shri Kamalapati Tripathi, Shri K. Venkataratnam and Shri A.P. Sharma, strengthened our apprehensions in regard to your attitude to those whom you consider as my supporters. Only the previous evening we had all met in a meeting of the Parliamentary Board. You did not mention those matters.

"We got the news of your action late in the evening, when you and the other office-bearers had gone to bed and I was leaving for Laccadives early next morning. It was only after careful consideration of these actions, that I and other colleagues in the Working Committee, decided to write to you on the 8th of September. However, you have made a grievance of this, whereas the aggrieved parties who had been hurt by your illegal acts were others. Your statement that the letter was published in the Press before it reached you is not correct.

"Then again you have complained that the Working Committee members have been carrying on a campaign of vilification against the Congress President and have taken the initiative in demanding an All-India Congress Committee session. This is a gross misrepresentation of facts. I have not come across any campaign, much less a vilification campaign against you by any Working Committee member. The constitution of the Congress provides for the requisitioning of an All-India Congress Committee meeting for a specific purpose and here the requisition was being made to hold the election of the President when his normal term expires in December. I do not see anything wrong in this move, particularly when a majority of the All-India Congress Committee members feel that it would be in the interest of the organisation to hold the election at the end of the normal term. It is open to you, if you so desire, to contest the election and get elected in the usual course.

"But it is unfortunate that you should have chosen to cast aspersions on a large number of members of the organisation of which you are the head and allege that the solidarity, loyalty and respect to the organisation are being impaired. It seems to me that you have raised the various matters in your letter in order to cloud the issues that have been raised by the members, who have exercised their undoubted democratic right of asking for a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee.

"The role of the party organisation and the governmental wing was clearly indicated in the Unity Resolution. I have never claimed absolute powers to the Government or for myself as Prime Minister ignoring the party altogether. On the other hand, I feel strongly that the organisation and the Government have to function in a complementary manner in the interest of the party and the country, governmental action alone cannot bring about the wide-ranging social and economic changes in India that are vitally necessary and urgent. The work of the organisation does not end with the laying down of broad policies. Even more important is its responsibility to rally the people in their millions in support of accepted policies. It is precisely because the Government is the Congress Party, Government can only rule effectively if the party is active among the people, that we are disturbed that there has not been the vitally needed organisational support that the present situation demands.

"Very many issues and crimes have arisen in the country, which could have been more easily dealt with if only the organisation had been alive and active among the people in support of governmental

policies and practice. One may pertinently put the question: What did the organisation and in particular, the central party leadership do when communal riots broke out in Ahmedabad, in the flare up in Andhra Pradesh on the Telengana issue, the explosive situation in Punjab and Haryana, regarding the future of Chandigarh and when the agitation was started in Assam for the establishment of a second refinery? These are some instances where the organisation could have played an effective role in mobilising public opinion in the right direction.

"You have made yet another grievance that I have spoken against the Syndicate as a reactionary coterie in the party. I do not think I have ever mentioned the word 'Syndicate' in any of my speeches or statements, nor have I characterised anybody in the Congress organisation as 'reactionary'. I have spoken up against vested interests and some of the allegations that were being made against me and our policies in the Press.

"However, one cannot fail to note Shri S.K. Patil's public utterances about many of the accepted policies of the Congress like bank nationalisation and the abolition of privy purse, etc. Unfortunately your own presidential speech in the Faridabad session was a condemnation of many of the policies which our organisation has all along stood. Many remarked that your Faridabad speech was worthy of a Swatantra leader. We cannot completely ignore these tendencies in the Congress organisation.

"I have never claimed bank nationalisation as my own programme. On the contrary time and again I have emphasised that I was carrying out only the old programme of the Congress Party. I think it is necessary however to clear the false allegation that I had opposed bank nationalisation. You are well aware that Shri Morarji Desai was strongly against this proposal. Shri Desai had even threatened to resign if such a measure was insisted upon. It was the strong pressure that prevented me from implementing a measure which I always felt was vitally necessary for our country's progress and finally after the Bangalore All-India Congress Committee session, I decided to relieve Shri Desai of the Finance portfolio only so as to put through this measure.

"Your remarks about my promoting the cult of personality around myself are so unfounded that I must describe them as saddening rather than hurtful. As you are aware, the precise relationship between Government and the party organisation is a complex question that has often come up for debate not only in our country, but in other coun-

tries of the democratic type. Certain fundamental principles must govern this relationship, and we have to find a practical working formulation of these principles suitable to the concrete circumstances of our country today. This is what I have been trying to do.

"You have charged me with developing a group mentiality. Many persons who are even critical in a hostile way against me have been put on important committees, boards, etc. But in delegations where the Government point of view has to be put forward, we cannot afford to include persons who do not wholeheartedly subscribe to all our policies.

"If there is any lapse by any person, the competent authority will certainly deal with it according to the law and rules. I have never intervened in favour of anybody who has committed any breach of any law or regulation.

"Mention has been made about the collection of funds on behalf of the party without being accounted for. In this connection it would be interesting to note what has been happening in some of the States. Has any account been rendered by any of the Working Committee members of the funds collected for general and by-elections? Shri S.K. Patil openly admitted that he had collected a large sum of money at the time of 1967 elections. Has this been accounted for? Did this money find its way to the All-India Congress Committee? I have no objection in your initiating any action against individuals who have misbehaved in the collection of money, but let it to be done in an impartial manner without fear or favour.

"You have expressed fears about the emergence of one-man rule in the organisation and Government. It is not possible for Government to function unless the head of the Government has full authority. There are, however, built-in safeguards in the Constitution and there is the ever watchful eye of Parliament to curb any of these unwholesome tendencies.

"But I am afraid, the same cannot to be said of our organisation. Where is democratic functioning when there is bogus membership, sham elections, bossism, etc., rampant in the organisation, when the President himself can arbitrarily act to remove members of the Working Committee in the teeth of the constitution of the Congress. There are innumerable instances where good and honest partymen were thrown out unceremoniously just because they were not prepared to toe the line of the local boss. This state of affairs must end. But how many are seriously worried about these defects and deficiencies? In contrast \v utilise and thrive on these to maintain their position in the party.

"I want to assure you and the party in all sincerity, that I do not seek any personal gain or advantage, I want the Congress Party to be strong and united, committed to the principles of democracy, secularism and socialism. Let us weed out the forces which are against these accepted ideals and policies. Let us evolve methods for the healthy functioning of the organisation.

"It is from this point of view that the majority of members of the All-India Congress Committee have come forward to ask for a special meeting of the All-India Congress Committee. The duty of the organisational head was to respond to this request of the party members. He has no special responsibility or duty apart from the organisation whose will is represented by the supreme body in the organisation, the All-India Congress Committee. Whoever sets at naught the aspirations and will of the organisation cannot claim to be a democrat, much less claim to safeguard the integrity of the party or the democratic functioning of the party.

"But all these matters that I have dealt with above can only be understood against the background of the fundamental reason for the present situation. The crisis facing the Congress organisation reflected in its essence, the deep crisis facing our country. The difficult problems of development have thrown up new challenges to our people. It was the Faridabad All-India Congress Committee session that showed the widely different responses to this new challenge, in your speech as President on the one hand and the programme adopted by the All-India Congress Committee on the other.

"The discussions at the Bangalore All-India Congress Committee session further sharpened these differences. My note attempted to put forward positive and radical solutions to these problems as the only way to meet the new challenges facing India. In contrast was the content of the speech of Shri Morarji Desai, which while purporting to propose the resolution based on this note, in fact subverted its entire approach.

"Against this background it was inevitable when, with the nationalisation of the banks, the Government was determined to implement the accepted policies, the conflict inside the Congress has deepened.

"The question is asked: Why should not the political leadership of the Government push forward with the implementation of the Bangalore All-India Congress Committee resolution and 10 points programme ignoring the hostility of the present leadership to the organisation? For after all those in charge of the organisation cannot possibly impose this.

But the truth is that the implementation of such a radical programme cannot be done by the Government alone.

"In fact what is necessary is a dynamic leadership inside the Government, taking clear-cut decisions on the one hand, and outside among the people an organisational leadership that moves with clarity and inspiration to mobilise the entire people behind this new programme for Indian regeneration, in defence of secularism and for national integration and unity. It is this double need that really has led to the crisis facing our organisation. Nobody can deny that in several parts of our country our organisation has in fact become defunct. It does not react to new problems, observing the direction in which the people are moving nor is it able to mobilise support for the decisions of the Government which are obviously the only correct solutions to the difficult problems facing us.

"The present tense situation should not be prolonged and the only democratic solution is to take the matter to the All-India Congress Committee as urgently as possible. Therefore instead of standing on technicalities and complaining that the All-India Congress Committee meeting has been called in defiance of the constitution, I appeal to you to preside over that meeting and provide the earliest opportunity for members to express their views and abide by the democratic decision of the party. Let the party be the sole arbiter, regardless of personalities, as to what is in the best interest of the party and the country.

"I conclude with the request that if you feel that the All-India Congress Committee should be properly convened by a requisition sent by you, then you might call the meeting to be held in Delhi on 22nd and 23rd of this month.

"Since you have released your letters to the Press, I am also doing so."

APPENDIX XVI

Text of the Resolution adopted by the rival group of the Members of the Congress Working Committee and special invitees held at Mrs. Indira Gandhi's residence on November 2, 1969.

"The plea put forward by the resolution (passed by the Working Committee earlier in the day) for co-operation and a spirit of give and take on the part of those who were in fact rudely shut out of the deliberations of the Working Committee is wholly disingenuous and designed to shift the responsibility for creating the crisis on those who have actually become victims of the abuse of the authority of the President of the Congress.

"These pretensions of solicitude for unity can deceive none in the country in view of the fact that on the eve of the meeting of the Working Committee, a step was taken by the President deliberately to disrupt it as a consequence of the unconstitutional and improper removal of three of its members.

"This action of the President was obviously taken for the purpose of manipulating a majority in the Working Committee for securing the factional ends of a section of the Working Committee.

"The situation that has thus been created left no choice for those attending the meeting and it is thus clear where the onus lies for creating the rupture which the resolution has deplored.

"The pious appeals for co-operation would have carried more credibility if there had been at the same time an offer to redress the grave wrong done already by asking those who have been removed from the Working Committee to participate along with others.

"A misleading impression is sought to be created that the decision to hold a meeting of the AICC in the ordinary course would have met the needs of the situation and therefore any special meeting in pursuance of the requisition by over 400 members of the AICC became unnecessary and superfluous. It has been conveniently ignored that the requisition meeting is for a specific purpose.

"If there had been any genuine intent in their appeal for unity, it should have been accompanied by an assurance that the resolution on the requisition would be considered in the December meeting.

"If the requisition was taken as an expression of no confidence, it should have been treated as a matter of grave concern for the organisation, specially when the number of members of the AICC who supported it constitute an absolute majority of the total strength of the body.

"The President in all propriety and for the sake of his own self-respect should have taken the earliest opportunity to ascertain the measure of support he enjoys instead of taking cover under an erroneous interpretation of the constitution.

"On top of it, to threaten those who would participate in the meeting to be held in pursuance of the requisition notice would be an act of suppression and a clear violation of democratic spirit and principles.

"It is also strange that those who call for unity and co-operation have in unmistakable terms condemned the foreign policy of their own Party Government without verifying the facts from the Government".

APPENDIX XVII

Text of Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad's letter to Mr. Nijalingappa dated November 3, 1969.

"I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated October 31, 1969.

"At the outset, I must state that, under the constitution of the Indian National Congress adopted at the Bangalore session and the rules, the President of the Congress has no power to remove any person from the membership of the Working Committee. You will appreciate that, under Article 5 of the constitution, the term of 'every Congress committee and its office-bearers, the executive and members shall ordinarily be two years'. The term of a member of the Working Committee is also governed by this Article, viz, Article 5.

"It may be noted that, under Article 18 which deals with the constitution of the Working Committee, the committee shall consist of the President and 20 members of whom 10 will be elected by the AICC and the rest 'appointed by the President'. No distinction is made between the status or membership of the Working Committee of elected members and of members appointed by the President. Therefore, the fact that the President appoints 10 members has no bearing on the term of office of these members and it is only one of the two methods to be followed in constituting the Working Committee.

"In principle, it has nothing to do with the term of membership of a member of the Working Committee. Whether elected or appointed, which is obviously governed only by Article 5, the constitution does not provide that a nominated member retains his membership only so long as he enjoys the confidence of the President.

"Further, you have resorted to the unprecedented step by sending a letter at about 11 p.m. prior to the meeting of the Working Committee on the following day though all the allegations made to justify your action were apparently available to you when the notice of the meeting was issued. Hence, I have to state that your action in purporting to remove me from the membership of the Working Committee is mala fide and entirely against Article 5 of the constitution of the Congress and, therefore, illegal, not enforceable and cannot be taken notice of. I must state very definitely now that I continue to be a member of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress.

"Regarding the rest of your very long letter, I can only say that it is a laboured effort to justify the obviously illegal action with which you have concluded the letter by purporting to remove me from the membership of the Working Committee. It is not only amazing but also contrary to principles of natural justice that even the elementary courtesy of providing an opportunity of showing cause was not extended before resorting to the illegal action taken by you. The first para of your letter is devoted to a description of what you allege to be my activities in the party prior to election of the President.

"I must state that I am surprised that you should have even referred to these allegations at all in view of the fact that all these matters were dealt with in the resolution of the Working Committee held on 25th August, 1969. The rights and wrongs, if any, of different persons in the different allegations made about their conduct prior to the election of the President were thrashed out in the meeting.

"You might recall that the Working Committee after noting 'that mistakes have been committed on all sides in the wake of conflict of ideas and approaches in the last few weeks' called upon all Congressmen 'to help create conditions in which the normal and healthy functioning of the party can be restored'.

The resolution further called upon the members 'to strive to contribute to unity in the organisation based on commitment to the accepted policies thus generating a new dynamism on the political and economic front.' In view of this, you should have seen the wisdom of refraining from referring to those matters again.

"Hence I do not think that any useful purpose would be served by my dealing with all such allegations which you have levelled against me in the earlier part of your letter, I can only deplore the fact that you have used language which is not in consonance with the dignity of the high office that you hold, and if you want to re-open history, the facts and circumstances of your movement and conduct speak eloquently of what you have done.

"For you to write that in the Working Committee when I was confronted with the demand to produce evidence in support of my allegations against you, contained in my letter dated August 11, 1969, that I confessed that I have no evidence to offer, is a travesty of truth. As you are well aware, it was only in the interest of unity of the great organisation to which you and I have the honour to belong that I desisted from pursuing the matter further.

"I now deal with the latter part of your letter which purports to

cover my conduct after the Unity Resolution was adopted. You have referred to speeches made by me in different parts of the country. I have at no place said anything which can be construed to go against the Unity Resolution. None of my speeches can be construed either as acts of indiscipline or as acts that can be described as a disruptionist role.

"Further, apart from making these vague allegations, you have not given a single extract from any one of those speeches which would show that I have acted against the letter and spirit of the Unity Resolution. In the absence of this, I am unable to make any comment except to say that in all my speeches I have remained loyal to that resolution and I have only explained its significance to the members of the Congress as well as to the public.

"You have also referred to my letter dated October 8, 1969, protesting against the arbitrary orders for the removal of Shri C. Subramaniam and others, which was also signed by other members of the Working Committee, that compelled you to desist from issuing the order for the removal of Shri C. Subramaniam from membership of the Working Committee. The apprehension we then had is now amply justified by your own action.

"In this connection, it may also be relevant to remind you that apart from the letters that you were about to issue to Shri C. Subramaniam, you had issued two letters to the president of the APCC and the president of the UPCC declaring their offices vacant. This action was an obvious act of reprisal against persons who occupy high position, apart from being entirely illegal and ultra vires of your powers as President.

"I now take up your references to the requisition demanding a session of the AICC to rescind the earlier resolution of the Congress and to elect a new President before the end of the year. I must express my surprise that you should take exception to the exercise by a member of the AICC of his ordinary right to sign a requisition asking for a meeting of the AICC and for consideration by the AICC of a perfectly valid and legal resolution. It is the desire of majority of the members of the AICC who signed the resolution that we should have the election of a President after his normal term is over. In advising me to resign from the Working Committee before raising it among the members of AICC, the revision or change of the decision of the Working Committee for extension of term of the President, you are not only responsible for preventing such discussion for the revision of the decision in the Working Committee but have conveniently forgotten that no resignation was given or action was taken against Shri Morarji Desai when he opposed the

decision for extension of the term of Shri Kamaraj Nadar as President at one of the Bangalore sessions after a decision to extend the term had been taken by the Working Committee.

"It is absurd to found a charge of commission of an act of gross indiscipline on conduct which in substance amounts only to the exercise of an elementary democratic right by a member of the AICC.

"In conclusion, I reiterate that I do not recognise your illegal action in removing me from the membership of the Working Committee and I state that in view of the obvious illegality of this act of yours I continue to be a member of the Working Committee and I do hope that you would realise the nature and scope of the power vested in the President under the constitution of Indian National Congress.

"Since your letter has been released to the Press, I hope you will not mind if this also is released to the Press."

APPENDIX XVIII

Text of Mr. Nijalingappa's letter to Mrs. Indira Gandhi dated November 2, 1969.

"This morning's newspaper reports say that you presided over a meeting of some members of the Working Committee yesterday. The reports say that the meeting was held at your residence. They also say that the meeting over which you presided decided *inter alia* that 'any decision by the Working Committee will be improper and not binding on the Congress organisation.'

"The meeting is also reported to have decided to convene a special meeting of the AICC in New Delhi on November 22 and 23 to consider the requisition resolution to elect a new Congress President.

"I am enclosing a copy of the resolution of the Working Committee adopted today on this reported decision. You are well aware that meetings of the AICC can only be convened by those whom the constitution of the Congress has empowered to do so and not by individuals who have no constitutional *locus standi* or rights in this behalf.

"If the reports appearing in the Press to the effect that you presided over the meeting which decided to convene a session of AICC and authorise Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad, Shri C. Subramaniam and Shri S. D. Sharma to take necessary steps for convening such a session are right, you will be deemed to have committed a serious breach of the party discipline and flouted the constitution of the party.

"I write this, therefore, to request you to explain your reported association with the move to convene an illegal and unconstitutional meeting of the AICC in violation of the party constitution and resolutions of the Working Committee".

APPENDIX XIX

Text of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's letter to Mr. Nijalingappa dated November 4, 1969.

"I was astonished to receive your letter of the 2nd instant calling upon me to explain my association with the move to convene, what you call, an illegal and unconstitutional meeting of the AICC in violation of the party's constitution and the resolution of the Working Committee. In my letter of yesterday's date, written in answer to yours of the 28th of October last I have dealt with the genesis and nature of the crisis through which our party has been passing in recent times. Instead of repeating what I have already stressed there, I should like to emphasise that we are not dealing with a mere technical or legal problem. What we are facing today is essentially a political crisis. Fruitless quibbling on the interpretation of one clause or another of our party constitution is hardly a proper approach. It has to be frankly recognised that there is a sharp cleavage in our approach to the economic and social problems which confront the country today.

"There is no doubt that our people and the vast majority of the rank and file of our organisation solidly support the steps I have recently taken. The Congress Party, as a democratic organization, must necessarily reflect and respond to the massive urge of our people and party members. I cannot decline to discharge the responsibilities as the leader of the CPP which are expected of me at this juncture. I have no doubt that the vast majority of the members of the AICC and the delegates support these policies and programmes which I have been advocating. The only forum to test this, if it is so desired; is to take the matter to the AICC or the plenary session of the Congress and to have a democratic decision.

"It is now a matter of public knowledge that more than 400 members of the AICC sent a requisition to you under Article 12(B) (D) of our constitution requesting the Working Committee to convene a meeting of the AICC in order to consider the resolution specified in the requisition notice. The requisition as proposed by a large majority of AICC members clearly demonstrates their complete faith in our approach to national problems. It was little expected that the democratic and the

constitutional right of the AICC members to have a requisition meeting would be set at nought by you and your supporters in the Working Committee on absolutely untenable, flimsy and tactical grounds.

"May I then humbly ask who has violated the constitution of our party? Is it those who have addressed a constitutional requisition to you or is it you and your supporters who have flagrantly violated the obligation to call the requisitioned meeting in accordance with Article 12(B) (D) which contains the following mandatory provision:

"The AICC shall meet as often as required by the Working Committee or on a joint requisition addressed to the Working Committee by not less than 20% of the total number of AICC members having full voting rights. Such requisition shall specify the purpose for which the requisitionists desire a meeting of the AICC. A requisitioned meeting shall be held within two months of the receipt of the requisition, provided that not more than one requisition can be moved in one year. At any requisitioned meeting, additional items of business may be brought up by the Working Committee for consideration.

"It does not require much legal knowledge to appreciate that the Article leaves no discretion with any one to decline to call the requisitioned meeting.

"When more than 50% of the members of the AICC desired a meeting was there any justification to frustrate the move? You have alleged that the resolution amounted to a censure on you. If you consider it so, it would be all the more necessary and proper for you, as the head of a democratic political party, to call the meeting to ascertain the opinion of the members. I think it would be a distortion to describe the requisition as a motion of censure against you. It was not possible for me or anyone else who has concern for the democratic way in which our party and its leaders must function to sit as silent spectators when the basic rights of our members to meet and assemble and express their views were being stifled.

"I would have failed in my duty had I remained mute and not reacted in the manner in which I and many of our colleagues have done, and for which I have no doubt that we have the overwhelming support of our party and the people. It is unfortunate if not hypocritical for you to charge me with serious breach of party discipline and with having flouted the party constitution. By curious logic, you have also characterised the convening of the requisitioned meeting as illegal and unconstitutional and as amounting to a violation of the party's constitution and the resolution of the Working Committee.

"I strongly repudiate your charge and state, on the contrary, that you and your supporters in the Working Committee have flagrantly violated our party constitution and acted illegally in rejecting the valid demand for a meeting of the AICC. You have also wrongfully and illegally purported to remove three valued members of the Working Committee to achieve this illegal purpose. It is necessary to caution that no Working Committee meeting would be valid if they are wrongfully excluded therefrom.

"I do not think I owe an explanation for what I have done as we have done nothing which is not legal or proper. On the contrary, it is those who have violated our party constitution and its democratic principles in stifling the voice of the members of the AICC and have thus created a crisis in the party and the country who owe an explanation. Your demand for an explanation from me confirms the general belief that you and your supporters are bent upon, even at the risk of splitting the party, ousting those who do not see eye to eye with you even though they may represent the majority view in the party. If your intention was to frighten those who differ from you from expressing their point of view freely, you will be disappointed.

"While concluding, may I request you again to ponder and review the steps you have been taking. As the head of our organisation, you have a great responsibility and I appeal to you in all sincerity to see whether it is not still possible to seek an early verdict of our party and to abide by it."

APPENDIX XX-A

Text of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's letter to Dr. Ram Subhag Singh dated November 3, 1969.

"According to reports published in newspapers this morning, the Congress Working Committee adopted several resolutions which are highly critical of Government policies and performance.

"As you know, the Government policy has been discussed in Cabinet meetings at which you had been present. Since you attended the Working Committee meeting, it would not be unfair to presume that you are a party to the resolutions which were passed there and this means your dissociation with Government's policies.

"In the circumstances, it would be in accordance with the recognised practice that you tender your resignation from the Council of Ministers."

APPENDIX XX-B

Text of Dr. Ram Subhag Singh's letter to Mrs. Indira Gandhi dated November 4, 1969.

"I have your letter of 3rd instant in which you have referred to the resolution adopted by the Congress Working Committee on November 1 and 2.

"You were good enough to have invited me through Shri S.N. Sinha on October 31/November 1 night in connection with the Congress Working Committee meeting and urged me to attend the meeting of the Working Committee members which you were going to convene at your residence on November 1 at 9-30 a.m., exactly at the time fixed for the meeting of the Congress Working Committee. I told you that I won't attend your meeting. I do not want the Congress to die. Next morning I attended the meeting of the Congress Working Committee at the AICC office. I did so because I consider myself a humble worker of the Indian National Congress. Earlier also at the time of the Presidential election I had expressed similar views when you had called me to see you in that regard.

"As you know I wanted discussion on the Rabat debacle in the Cabinet. But we did not get that opportunity save and except hearing the views

of the Foreign Minister and the Industrial Development Minister.

"I have been elected to Parliament on Congress ticket and was invited to join a Congress Government. I sincerely and devotedly adhered to the Congress policy and programme both inside and outside the Government and propose to do so in future also wherever I may remain. Having that in mind, I hereby tender my resignation from the post of your Cabinet Ministership."

APPENDIX XX-C

Text of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's letter to Dr. Ram Subhag Singh dated November 4, 1969.

"I have just received your letter of resignation. If I may say so I have not understood the precise purpose of paragraphs 2 and 3 of your letter unless it be to show greater concern for the Congress than you credit us with. We along with many others have also served the Congress for long and under trying and difficult circumstances. History alone will judge who is helping the Congress to live and who is bent on destroying it.

"In adhering to Congress policies one must take into account what the Congress has always stood for. Our leaders had envisaged and shaped the Congress as a movement for national regeneration responding continuously to changing situations and challenges.

"The meeting held in my house was called to discuss the situation which had arisen due to the Congress President's action in removing two members from the Working Committee. I had not sent for you although, I hasten to add, I was glad that you had been called. I have no recollection of hearing you remark that 'you did not want the Congress to die' although I accompanied you to the door.

"Your letter implies that you had strong feelings on the subject of the Rabat Conference. Would it not have been appropriate for you to take the earliest opportunity to express such feelings in the Cabinet or either to speak or write to me about them? You chose not to do so. All Cabinet Ministers will agree that in no Cabinet meeting have I ever cut short any discussion. During the Cabinet discussion on Rabat, several members did ask questions and express their views. Neither you nor anyone else asked for a separate discussion.

"I should like to take this opportunity to convey to you my appreciation of your assistance during your tenure.

"Since you have released your letter to the Press, I am taking the liberty of doing the same."

APPENDIX XXI

Text of the Working Committee Resolution of November 12, 1969 removing Mrs. Indira Gandhi from the Primary Membership of the Congress.

"The Working Committee has given deep thought to the painful situation resulting from a series of developments in the recent past in connection with the maintenance of discipline in the Congress organisation. The public conduct of Congressmen has always been subject to certain well-defined rules and procedures and some well-established conventions. Violation of these rules and procedures particularly by Congressmen occupying leading positions can have ruinous consequences or the organisation as well as the country.

"We saw convincing evidence of this at the time of the Presidential election. The Congress was badly split with indiscipline indulged in by the Prime Minister and some of her colleagues. There was insistent demand by many sections of Congress for action to be taken to deal with a grave act of indiscipline. The Working Committee in its anxiety to maintain the unity of the party for the sake of democracy and the country condoned this indiscipline. Many members of the Working Committee and other Congressmen were not happy with this condonation but there was a feeling of relief that the unity of the party even at a heavy price was saved.

"The hope entertained at the time of passing the Unity Resolution has, however, been rudely shattered by subsequent events. The Prime Minister launched a campaign against the Congress organisation especially at its top level holding it mainly responsible for whatever ills the country was afflicted with and slowness in the implementation of radical Congress policies embodied in the resolutions of the Working Committee and the All-India Congress Committee. It was propagated that to speed up the implementation of Congress policies it was necessary to have greater harmony between the Parliamentary wing and the Congress organisation. The word 'harmony' is a misnomer for dominance and the desire to capture the Congress machinery first at the top level and then at other levels.

"To achieve this objective a signature campaign was launched for ousting the Congress President. The campaign was inspired and organ-

ised by the Prime Minister and her colleagues. The All-India Congress Committee members in various States left to themselves would have thought of no such move but the picture changed when the inspiration came from the top and from persons occupying high ministerial positions. It is, therefore, significant that barring a few exceptions all Ministers whether at the Centre or in States where the Chief Ministers fell in line with the leading organisers put their signatures to the document. Pressure-tactics and other influences brought reluctant signatures from many other All-India Congress Committee members who signed the document.

"Such a thing has never happened in the history of the Congress before. In the event of differences between the Prime Minister and the Congress President talks and discussions at the top level were enough to bring about the desired result. But in the present case the entire organisation was exposed to false and misleading propaganda and pressurised to toe a particular line.

"This is not a situation the Working Committee charged with the responsibility of maintaining the dignity and discipline of the Congress organisation can view with equanimity. The Congress President took some steps to maintain the dignity of the Working Committee and removed for reasons which are now public knowledge two members from the Working Committee. A third ceased to function as a member of the Working Committee when he ceased to be a member of the All-India Congress Committee. The Prime Minister and some other members of the Working Committee, in protest not only did not attend the meeting of the Working Committee held on November 1 and 2, 1969, but held their own separate meetings and questioned the authority of the legally-constituted Working Committee and refused to abide by its decisions. While the Working Committee declared that the requisitioned meeting of the All-India Congress Committee was unconstitutional the Prime Minister and her colleagues in defiance of the Working Committee's decision sponsored the requisitioned meeting for considering a proposition which has been declared out of order by the Working Committee. A parallel Working Committee and a parallel All-India Congress Committee are patent and grave acts of indiscipline.

"The Working Committee is grateful to the Congress President for his letter to the Prime Minister dated October 28, 1969. The Working Committee endorses what has been said in that letter because it puts the case of the Working Committee in its proper sequence and perspective. The Congress President wrote to the Prime Minister requesting

her to explain her reported association with the move to convene an illegal and unconstitutional meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in violation of the party constitution and the decision of the Working Committee. In her reply which has been published the Prime Minister defended her illegal act and refused to recognise the authority of the Working Committee.

"This stand of the Prime Minister is in keeping with her conduct at the time of the Presidential election, the tenor of her public pronouncements on her position as the Prime Minister of India, her constant denigration of the Congress organisation, her tendency to divide Congressmen among those who are her supporters and those who are not her supporters, her peculiar attitude to questions of discipline, her basic and overriding desire to concentrate all power in her hands so that her colleagues are her nominees in any offices they might occupy. This spells a grave danger to the democratic functioning of the Congress organisation. The Working Committee is, therefore, regretfully obliged to remove Smt. Indira Gandhi from the primary membership of the Congress for her deliberate act of defiance of the decision of the Working Committee and for actively sponsoring the setting up of a rival Working Committee and a rival All-India Congress Committee and by her other attitudes and actions spreading indiscipline in the Congress organisation.

"With the removal from membership of the Congress, Smt. Indira Gandhi ceases to be the Leader of the Congress Party in Parliament. The Working Committee directs the Congress Party in Parliament to take necessary steps immediately to elect a new leader."

In another resolution the Congress Working Committee said: "The Congress Working Committee has taken a decision today removing Smt. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, from the primary membership of the Congress. This is the saddest moment in the history of the Congress.

"Ever since the Bangalore session of the All-India Congress Committee in July last there has been a continuous chain of unhappy events causing anxiety and pain to millions of Congressmen whose loyalty to the organisation has been its greatest source of strength. The Working Committee had to choose between Smt. Indira Gandhi and everything that the Congress stood for; and it has rightly decided in favour of the latter.

"The Working Committee warns all loyal Congressmen that the immediate future will be one of trials and tribulations and they have to be vigilant and prepared for whatever sacrifices that may be de-

manded of them to maintain the integrity of the organisation. The greatest of national heroes have given all they had to build this great organisation. They have also shown us the path of unity, discipline and strength. The people of this generation owe a deep debt of gratitude to them and the nation. In the hour of peril we must not falter whatever the cost we will have to pay. The Congress Working Committee has no doubt that in the end truth will prevail over falsehood and we shall be vindicated for what we were compelled to do today.

"This is an hour for self-introspection. Let not the future historian say of us that in the hour of peril both to the Congress and the nation we wavered and faltered in our loyalty to the great organisation to which we all have the honour to belong. The Working Committee expects all Congressmen to stand by the organisation and vindicate its honour and dignity."

APPENDIX XXII

Text of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's letter addressed to Congressmen dated November 8, 1969.

"There is a crisis in the Congress and in the nation.

"It is not a crisis which has come about all of a sudden. It has been building over a long time.

"What we witness today is not a mere clash of personalities, and certainly not a fight for power. It is not as simple as a conflict between the parliamentary and organisational wings.

"It is a conflict between two outlooks and attitudes in regard to the objectives of the Congress and the methods in which the Congress itself should function.

"It is a conflict between those who are for socialism, for change and for the fullest internal democracy and debate in the organisation on the one hand, and those who are for the status quo, for conformism and for less than full discussion inside the Congress.

"Even if some people are in the second group, this basic analysis is not affected. An individual here or there, not sharing the outlook of the group does not alter the basic facts of the situation.

"The Congress stands for democracy, secularism, socialism and non-alignment in international relations.

"The various policy-making units of our organisation, whether the Working Committee, or the All-India Congress Committee or the delegates' session, have reaffirmed these objectives from time to time. But within the Congress there has been a group which did not have total faith in these objectives. People of this group paid only lip-service to these ideals because they knew that if they openly expressed their reservations they would lose the power and influence they had derived from the party.

"This group is not a new phenomenon. It has existed in our party throughout the last 22 years and even before. I know that this group constantly tried to check and frustrate my father's attempt to bring about far-reaching economic and social changes. The Congress was moulded by Mahatma Gandhi and my father to be the prime instrument of social change. The acceptance of office and of responsibilities

of Government was, after all, to bring about this non-violent revolution in our society. If this cannot be done, what is the use of Congress or what is the purpose of being in Government?

"In his last years, my father was greatly concerned that the Congress was moving away from the people and that there were people inside the Congress who were offering resistance to change. My own experience even before the fourth general election was that the forces of the status quo, with close links with powerful economic interests were ranged against me.

"While the biggest leaders of the Congress were involved in the tasks of Government and administration in the years after freedom, some persons developed a vested interest in power. They began to regard themselves as the Congress, forgetting that they could keep their mandate only through service and only if the Congress had a powerful mass base.

"To consolidate their hold and in the name of discipline they pushed out of the Congress many honest and devoted workers, whose loyalty to the organisation and its ideals was beyond question. Their arrogant use of authority made some people resign from the Congress or retire from active work. It also discouraged fresh streams of young workers from flowing into the Congress.

"The worker in the field was denied his right to mould the party and the party registers were packed with bogus names. Recently the tendency to acquire factional control of the organisation has become more intense. This is linked up with the desire to control the direction of Government policy and economic life in line with the narrow purposes and interests of a limited section.

"This is the background to the present crisis. As I recently told the Bombay Pradesh Congress workers, some of those who are not worried about a split remained complacent when the strength of the Congress was being wilfully sacrificed in State after State and in election after election.

"The time has come to bring all this into the open, so that there might be full and free discussion of the problems of the Congress. I do not want a split in our great national organisation, which brought freedom to our country and which has to fulfil its promise by building a new society.

"But I want unity which is a unity on principles and on methods of work. To speak of socialism and secularism, to vote for them in meetings, but to have public image of association with those who are

opposed to secularism and socialism is no service to the Congress.

"The full details of the present crisis are well-known to all of you. For your convenience copies of the letters which were exchanged between Shri Nijalingappa and me (and between him and Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad and Shri C. Subramaniam) are attached.

"The correspondence fully brings out the background of the requisition which the majority of the All-India Congress Committee members presented to the Congress Working Committee and which was so summarily, unconstitutionally and wisely turned down.

"As you know, certain Chief Ministers strove to bring about a compromise, but even while they were continuing their efforts, Shri Nijalingappa asked me to 'explain my 'conduct', Even after this notice was served, I met Shri Nijlingappa and discussed with him certain proposals on which Shri K.C. Abraham and Shri Veerendra Patil had worked.

"Since Shri Nijalingappa, for whose personal qualities I have regard, had felt that the requisition was a vote of censure on him, inasmuch as it was confined to the Congress President's election and left out other elections, I suggested that we might have a new election to all elected officials above the PCC level as an interim measure, pending the revision of rolls and new elections at all levels on the basis of rolls which were cleansed of bogus membership.

"Shri Nijalingappa on the contrary spoke of taking up the whole process of election on the basis of the existing rolls—which is obviously no answer to the crisis since it would retard the remedial action that can still be taken to set things right in the organisation.

"Even as regards this proposal, unsatisfactory as it was, Shri Nijalingappa made no firm commitment. He only said that any written proposal which was made to him would be placed before the Working Committee. He did not vouchsafe any information on whether the meeting would be that of the truncated body or of the full body. I did not discuss the 'show cause' notice with him and he did not offer to rescind it. From other reliable sources it was learnt that he had every intention of taking action against me and others.

"To go back from these details to the main question of the crisis before the country—outside the narrow confines of our party, great and turbulent changes are taking place in the minds and hearts of our people. There are new trends of thought. There are new aspirations. And there are new tensions apart from some other older tensions. Political consciousness has matured and deepened among the masses

and in this process, many ideas, some old and some new, are being canvassed, and a kind of crystallisation has been steadily taking place.

"Faced with this change in the national political environment, our party has been in danger of losing its orientation—it has been trying to cope with the situation by a ritualistic repetition of the formal positions of the past without making a fresh assessment of the needs of the present and the future in accordance with its own living revolutionary tradition.

"There is loss of confidence in ourselves and in the destiny both of our country and of our party. There is a tendency to be influenced by the forces of reaction, revivalism and vested interests.

"In this situation, it is necessary for the Congress to recognise frankly that it no longer commands in full the loyalty and emotions of the nation as it did in the past. It must also recognise that it cannot discharge the role of leadership unless it redefines its position sharply in relation to the competing points of view in the country—and it can serve as an effective instrument of the national purpose only if it revitalises its membership and its methods of functioning.

"The Congress must open its closed doors to winds of change, re-establish its living links with the people in every town and village of India. It must make a fresh effort to forge fresh links with the new generation which has grown since our Independence. It must reflect the modern elements in our society. It must draw unto itself the live elements of modern science and technology. It must command the loyalty of our intelligentsia. It must seek to induce amongst the ordinary people a feeling of confidence that we are a party which seeks to serve the people.

"In the nature of things, a national debate on the issues at stake and the competing points of view cannot be carried on without some pain and emotional disturbance. But the need for the debate is inescapable. No one can stifle it. Indeed, effective political leadership lies in promoting an orderly, sober, civilised discussion of the issues we have to resolve. We cannot treat a fresh debate as the sign of a revolt against any individual or group. The subversion of free debate constitutes a danger to democracy not only within our party, but in the country.

"The basic issue in the conflict must be separated from other issues which, though important, are secondary. The basic issue is whether the democratic process shall prevail or not in the Congress.

"There are the legal and constitutional aspects of the conflict. These have been discussed fully in the correspondence that has passed be-

tween me and Shri Nijalingappa. The legal and constitutional issues are important. But behind them is the far more important issue whether Congressmen who have built the Congress at great sacrifice are to run it and mould it as they like or whether bosses should run it as they like. There has been always a conflict between bossism and democracy, and it is this conflict which has reached a critical stage.

"The .aim of the Congress still is to bring about far-reaching social and economic change amounting to a social revolution. But it has ceased to be a fit instrument of its own aims and is losing its sense of purpose. It has been losing its articulation, its sense of direction, and its old confidence. The average Congressmen has been denied his voice in it, and the committees at various levels are hardly functioning.

"The present conflict, or debate, or whatever else it is called, concerns what the Congress can still do for the people. It is wedded to democratic socialism. Both democracy and socialism are necessary. Without the one, the other cannot exist. Democracy is inevitable in the conditions of this country. So is socialism. The democratic process and the socialist process can go together. Indian experience has proved it, and we must take the processes together. The Congress, as the most broad-based organisation, can do it best. That is why it has always to keep its goal of socialism in view and maintain the democratic process within itself.

"There is no place for a sectarian approach. Socialism in this country can come about only as the result of an open, broad movement. It cannot come overnight. Both the Government and the people must work for it. The people must be mobilised in support of socialist measures undertaken by the Government. Legislation alone is not enough.

"The organisation is important to mobilise the people for socialism. It is not enough for it to come to life only for elections. It must be constantly at work to educate the people regarding our policies and actions. Social power has to be organised in support of political power.

"This social power is necessary even to win elections. The organisation cannot afford to become weak in any part. It must be ever vigilant and active. Even with its recent amendments, the Constitution is still inadequate for the fast changing situation. The desire to immediately change the set-up even to a limited extent, arises because of the necessity to consider in depth in what manner further radical transformation of the organisation can be brought about. The membership must be real, not artificial. The commitment must be sincere, there must be a sense of urgency.

"The Government is a part of the organisation. If the organisation is alive, the Government will be aware of its responsibility. The state of the organisation is reflected in the legislative parties and the Government. There is no conflict between the two wings. The relations between them have often been discussed and are well understood.

"The importance of the organisation cannot be minimised. To make it real and alive and to make it work democratically, and dynamically, is the aim of the meeting of the members of the All-India Congress Committee that will be held in Delhi. It can release vast energies, and these energies can take the Congress and the people forward. This is the issue before us—other matters secondary".

APPENDIX XXIII

Constitution of The Indian National Congress as amended at the Bangalore Session of the AICC on July 11, 1969.

Article I: Object

The object of Indian National Congress is the well-being and advancement of the people of India and the establishment in India, by peaceful and constitutional means, of a Socialist State based on Parliamentary Democracy in which there is equality of opportunity and of political, economic and social rights and which aims at world peace and fellowship.

Article II: Constituents

The Indian National Congress will include the annual and special sessions of the Congress and,

(i) The All India Congress Committee, (ii) The Working Committee, (iii) Pradesh* Congress Committee, (iv) District*/City Congress Committees, (v) Committees subordinate to the District Congress Committee like Block or Constituency Congress Committee and other subordinate Committee to be determined by the Pradesh Congress Committee concerned.

Article III: Territorial Divisions

(a) Pradesh Congress Committees shall ordinarily be constituted in the Pradeshes named below with the headquarters mentioned against each:

Pradesh	*Headquarters*	*Pradesh*	*Headquarters*
1. Andhra	Hyderabad	11. Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
2. Assam	Gauhati	12. Maharashtra	Bombay
3. Bihar	Patna	13. Mysore	Bangalore
4. Bombay	Bombay	14. Punjab	Chandigarh
5. Delhi	Delhi	15. Rajasthan	Jaipur
6. Haryana	Chandigarh	16. Tamil Nadu	Madras
7. Gujarat	Ahmedabad	17. Tripura	Agartala
8. Himachal	Simla	18. Utkal	Cuttuck
9. Jammu & Kashmir	Srinagar	19. Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
10. Kerala	Trivandrum	20. West Bengal	Calcutta

*In this Constitution wherever the word "Pradesh" occurs, it will include Territorial", the word "District" will include "City" as required by the context.

(b) Territorial Congress Committees shall be constituted in the territories named below with the headquarters mentioned against each:

Territory	*Headquarters*	*Territory*	*Headquarters*
1. Chandigarh	Chandigarh	5. NEFA (North East Frontier Agency)	Bomdilla
2. Goa	Panjim	6. Pondicherry	Pondicherry
3. Manipur	Imphal		
4. Nagaland	Kohima		

(c) District Congress Committees shall be constituted in the areas named below with the headquarters mentioned against each and these DCCs shall be directly supervised by the AICC.

District	*Headquarters*
1. Andaman-Nicobar Islands	Port Blair
2. Laccadive-Minicoy-Amindivi Islands	Kavaratti
3. Dadra-Nagar Haveli	Selvassa

(d) A Pradesh Congress Committee may, with the previous sanction of the Working Committee, change its headquarters.

(e) The Working Committee may, after ascertaining the wishes of the Pradesh Congress Committee or Committees concerned, constitute a new Pradesh, abolish an existing Pradesh, merge any existing Pradeshes into one or assign to a Pradesh, a district or a portion or portions of a district from any other Pradesh.

(f) The Working Committee shall have the power to give representation in such manner as it thinks proper to areas in the Union of India as have not been included in the jurisdiction of any PCC and/or direct that such an area or part thereof be included in a neighbouring Pradesh.

Article IV: Membership

(a) (i) Any person of the age of 18 or over, who accepts Article I, shall, on making a written declaration in Form 'A' and on payment of biennial subscription of Re. 1.00 only, become a primary member of Congress provided that he is not a member of any other political party, communal or other which has a separate membership, constitution and programme.

(ii) No person shall become a primary member except in his permanent place of residence or where he carries on his work.

(iii) The term of membership, primary and active, shall be from 1st January to 31st December of the following year.

(b) Any person, who has been a primary member for two consecutive years, may become an active member on payment of subscription of Rs. 25.00 or on enrolling 25 primary members biennially, if he fulfils the following conditions and signs a declaration in Form (B):

(i) He is of the age of 21 or over;

(ii) He is a habitual wearer of hand-spun and hand-woven Khadi;

(iii) He abstains from alcoholic drinks and intoxicant drugs;

(iv) He does not observe or recognise untouchability in any shape or form;

(v) He believes in communal unity and has respect for the faith of others;

(vi) He undertakes to have a minimum training and to perform a minimum task as may be prescribed by the Working Committee;

(vii) The "minimum task" shall include the task of enrolling at least one subscriber to any one of the periodicals published by any Congress Committee.

(c) Primary and active membership shall be continuous so long as the biennial subscription is paid according to rules made thereunder and the other conditions prescribed are fulfilled.

Renewal of primary and active membership will be deemed to have been completed by depositing of requisite membership fee or fees and by filling the renewal of membership forms primary or active as the case may be.

(d) The biennial subscriptions paid by primary and active members shall be distributed in the following proportions between the various Congress Committees:

AICC	10%	DCC	25%
PCC	25%	Subordinate CCs	40%

Note : 40% share of primary and active membership subscription to be proportionately distributed amongst various subordinate Congress Committees below the DCC shall be determined by the Pradesh Congress Committee concerned.

Article V: Term of Congress Committee

The term of every Congress Committee and of its office-bearers, Executive Committee and members shall ordinarily be two years.

Article VI: Register of Members

(a) Permanent registers of active members shall be maintained by the PCCs and DCCs.

The Pradesh Congress Committees shall supply lists of their members to the Office of the All India Congress Committee and keep it informed of the changes made therein.

(b) The registers shall contain the full name, address, age, occupation, place of residence and date of enrolment of every member.

(c) Membership shall cease by death, resignation, removal or non-payment of biennial fee.

Article VII: Qualifications of Voters and Candidates

(a) Voters: Every primary member, whose name appears in the roll of primary members prepared in accordance with the rules framed in this behalf by the Working Committee, shall be entitled to vote in the elections to the Subordinate Congress Committees.

(b) Candidates: Only an active member, whose name is in the register of active members, shall be eligible for election as a member of any Congress Committee.

Article VIII: Co-opted Members

The Working Committee and the Executive Committee at Pradesh and lower levels may co-opt up to 5% of the total membership of the AICC, PCC and other lower Committees concerned as per rules prescribed by the Working Committee.

The co-opted members at the AICC, PCC and lower levels shall not exercise any voting right in any organisational election nor shall they contest any election in the organisation, however, no person who is a co-opted member shall be debarred for that reason from seeking election to full membership of any Committee in the normal manner.

Article IX: District Congress Committee

A. A DCC shall cover an area prescribed by the PCC in its Constitution and shall consist of:

(a) Four members elected by the members of the immediate subordinate Congress Committee of the DCC as per rules prescribed by the Working Committee.

(b) Ex-Presidents of the DCCs who have completed one full term* and are active members;

*Full term signifies the interval between two District Congress Committee elections or two years, whichever is less, provided that such of the ex-Presidents who have been Presidents for 365 days before 7-1-1964 shall continue to be ex-officio members of the DCC.

(c) Members of the PCC who reside in or have been elected from the District;

(d) Presidents of immediate subordinate Congress Committees, provided that they shall not be eligible to become either President or Secretary of the DCC;

(e) Members of the Legislature Congress Parties, both Central and State from the district, provided that they are active members;

(f) Leaders of the Congress Parties in Municipal Corporations, Municipalities and District Boards/Zilla Parishads or Janapads in the District, provided that they are active members;

(g) Members co-opted by the DCC executive as per rules prescribed by the Working Committee.

Article X: Pradesh Congress Committees

A. A Pradesh Congress Committee shall consist of:

(a) Members elected by electoral colleges comprising unit members to be elected at the rate of one for about 2,000 population.

Delimitation of the single member constituency shall be made by the PCC concerned at the rate of one for about a lakh of population with prior approval of the Working Committee.

Provided that:

(i) conditions and conduct of election will be in accordance with the rules prescribed by the Working Committee;

(ii) from the Pradeshes of Bombay and Delhi there shall be 56 and 30 members respectively and in the following Pradeshes there shall be 25 members each;

1. Goa, Daman & Diu
2. Tripura
3. Manipur
4. Nagaland
5. NEFA
6. Pondicherry

(iii) from the directly supervised DCCs of Andaman-Nicobar Islands, Laccadive-Minicoy-Amindivi Islands and Dadra-Nagar-Haveli Districts there shall be four members each.

(iv) from the Territory of Chandigarh there shall be 7 members and

(b) Ex-Presidents of the PCC who have served one full term* and are active members of the Congress;

(c) Presidents of the DCCs provided that they shall not be eligible to become either President or Secretary of the PCC;

*Full term signifies the interval between the two PCC elections or 2 years, whichever is less, provided that such of the ex-Presidents who have been Presidents for 365 days before 7-1-1964 shall continue to be ex-officio members of the PCC.

(d) AICC members who reside in the Pradesh;

(e) Members elected by the Congress Legislature Party at the rate of 5% of the number of PCC or TCC members subject to a maximum of 15.

(f) Members co-opted by the PCC Executive from special elements not adequately represented and others in accordance with the rules prescribed by the Working Committee.

B. Every member of the PCC shall pay an annual fee of Rs. 25.00 to the PCC of which Rs. 15.00 shall be remitted to the AICC as delegate fee and shall collect Rs. 100.00 for Congress fund biennially within 3 months of his election to the PCC and deposit it with the PCC and obtain a receipt thereof.

He shall receive certificate duly signed by one of the Secretaries of the PCC to the effect that he is a member and has collected Congress fund. No member who has not paid his fee and fund shall be entitled to exercise any of his functions.

The PCC* shall forward to the AICC office a certified list of the members not later than the date fixed by the Working Committee in that behalf.

C. Every Pradesh Congress Committee shall:

(a) ordinarily function through the District Congress Committees;

(b) subject to the general supervision and control of the AICC be incharge of the affairs of the Congress Committees within its own Pradesh and to that end frame its Constitution, not inconsistent with this Constitution which shall come into operation only with the previous sanction of the Working Committee;

(c) submit to the Working Committee an annual report of the work done by the Congress Organisation in the Pradesh including audited balance sheets;

(d) pay to the AICC the share due to it out of the members' fees *(vide Article* (IV) *(d) and clause B above)* before a date to be fixed by the Working Committee.

D. The Pradesh, which has not completed the formation of the PCC on or before the date fixed by the Working Committee may, at the discretion of the Working Committee, be disentitled to be represented at the Congress Session.

E. On the failure of any Pradesh Congress Committee to function in terms of the Constitution or in accordance with the direction of the

*PCC concerned will decide the proportion in which the Congress fund may be distributed among subordinate Congress Committee.

Working Committee, the Working Committee may suspend the existing PCC and form an Ad-hoc Committee to carry on Congress work in the Pradesh.

Article XI: Delegates

All members of the Pradesh Congress Committee shall be delegates to the Indian National Congress.

Article XII: All India Congress Committee

A. The All India Congress Committee shall consist of:

(a) One-eighth of the number of the PCC members elected by them from amongst themselves by proportional representation according to the system of single transferable vote, provided that the number is not less than five; however one member each shall be elected from Chandigarh TCC and from the directly supervised DCCs.

(b) President of the Congress;

(c) Ex-Presidents of the Congress, who have completed one full term* and are active members of the Congress.

(d) Presidents of the Pradesh Congress Committees, provided that they shall not be eligible to become either President or Secretary of the AICC;

(e) Leader of the Congress Party in Parliament;

(f) Leaders of the Congress Parties in the Legislature and State Legislative Assemblies in Union Territories;

(g) 15 members elected by the Congress Party in Parliament according to the system of single transferable vote;

(h) Members co-opted by the Working Committee from special elements not adequately represented and others in accordance with the rules prescribed by the Working Committee;

B. (a) The President of the Congress shall be the President of the All India Congress Committee;

(b) The AICC shall arrange for the implementation of the programme of the work laid down by the Congress and shall have powers to deal with matters and situations that may arise during its term of office;

(c) The AICC shall have power to frame rules, not inconsistent with this Constitution, for regularising all matters connected with the Congress which shall be binding on all subordinate Congress Committees;

*Full term signifies the interval between two AICC election or two years, whichever is less, provided that such of the ex-Presidents who have been Presidents before 7-1-1964 shall continue to be ex-officio members of the AICC.

(d) The AICC shall meet as often as required by the Working Committee, or on a joint requisition addressed to the Working Committee by not less than 20% of the total number of AICC members having full voting rights. Such requisition shall specify the purpose for which the requisitionists desire a meeting of the AICC. A requisitioned meeting shall be held within 2 months of the receipt of the requisition, provided that not more than one requisition can be moved in one year. At any requisitioned meeting, additional items of business may be brought up by the Working Committee for consideration.

(e) At all meetings of the AICC other than requisitioned meetings, at least 2 hours shall be allotted for consideration of propositions of which due notice has been given by the members of the AICC in accordance with the rules prescribed in that behalf;

(f) Seventy or one-fifth of the total number of members, whichever is less, shall form the quorum for a meeting of the AICC;

(g) Every member of the AICC* shall pay an annual fee of Rs. 25.00 and shall collect Rs. 200.00 for Congress fund within 3 months of his election to the AICC and deposit it with the AICC and shall obtain a receipt thereof. He shall receive a certificate duly signed by one of the Secretaries of the AICC to the effect that he is a member. Member will not be permitted to take part in any meeting of the AICC, Subjects Committee or any Congress Session without paying the fees.

Article XIII: Committees Subordinate to the DCC

The PCC may constitute Committees subordinate to the DCC with the membership emanating from the basic unit, at the rate of one member for about 2,000 population.

Article XIV: Subjects Committee

(a) The AICC shall meet as the Subjects Committee under the Chairmanship of the President at least one month prior to the Congress Session. The Working Committee, or in case a new President has been elected before the Session and there is no Working Committee appointed by him functioning, a Steering Committee appointed by the President, shall submit to the Subjects Committee the programme of work, including draft resolutions for the Congress Session. While drafting the resolutions the Working Committee or the Steering Committee shall take into consideration the resolutions recommended by the Pradesh Congress Committees and resolutions given notice of by the members of the AICC.

*A member of the AICC need not collect fund for PCC also.

(f) The Pradesh Congress Committee shall immediately forward the ballot-boxes to the AICC;

(g) As soon as may be after the receipt of the ballot-boxes the Returning Officer shall count the votes or the first preference recorded for each candidate. If a candidate secures more than 50 per cent of the votes of the first preferences, he shall be declared elected as President. If no candidate secures more than 50 per cent of the first preferences candidate who has secured the smallest number of first preferences shall be eliminated, and the second preferences, recorded by the voter who gave him the first preference shall be taken into account in counting the votes of the remaining candidates. In this counting the candidate who secures the smallest number of votes shall be eliminated. By this process of eliminating the candidates who secure the smallest number of votes in subsequent countings after the transfer of votes according to recorded preferences, the candidate who secures more than 50 per cent of the votes shall be declared elected as President;

(h) In the event of any emergency arising by reason of any cause such as the death or resignation of the President elected as above, the Working Committee shall forthwith fix a date for a fresh election by the delegates as prescribed above. In case such a procedure is not found possible by the Working Committee, it shall convene a meeting of the AICC to elect a President;

(i) The President shall preside over the Session of the Congress held after his election and during his term of office and he shall exercise all the powers of the Working Committee when it is not in session.

Article XVIII: Working Committee

(a) The Working Committee shall consist of the President of the Congress and twenty members, of whom ten members will be elected by the AICC as per rules prescribed by the Working Committee and the rest shall be appointed by the President. The President shall appoint a Treasurer and one or more General Secretaries from amongst the members elected by the AICC or appointed by the President. Ordinarily, members of the Working Committee will be appointed from amongst the members of the AICC but in special cases, delegates who are not members of the AICC may be appointed; provided however that a delegate so appointed shall cease to be a member of the Working Committee if he is not elected as a member of the AICC within six months of his appointment;

(b) The quorum for a meeting of the Working Committee shall be seven;

(c) The Working Committee shall be the highest executive authority of the Congress and shall have the power to carry out the policies and programmes laid down by the Congress and by the AICC and shall be responsible to the AICC. It shall be the final authority in all matters regarding interpretation and application of the provisions of this Constitution;

(d) The Working Committee shall place before every meeting of the AICC a report of the proceedings of the previous meeting of the AICC and also an agenda of business for the meeting and shall allot time for non-official resolutions of which due notice may have been given by the members of the AICC in accordance with the rules prescribed in that behalf;

(e) The Working Committee may appoint one or more auditors or inspectors or other officers to examine the records, papers and account books of all Congress Committees and organisations. It shall be incumbent on all such committees and organisations to furnish all the required information to the auditors, inspectors, or other officers and to give them access to all offices, accounts and other records;

(f) The Working Committee shall have the power;

(i) to frame rules for the proper working of the organisation. Such rules shall, as early as possible, be placed for the consideration of the AICC;

(ii) to issue instructions not inconsistent with this Constitution and frame rules in all matters not otherwise provided for;

(iii) to superintend, direct and control all Pradesh Congress Committees and subordinate Committees, as well as the Reception Committees;

(iv) to take such disciplinary action as it may deem fit against a Committee other than the AICC or an individual;

(v) in special cases to relax application of provision under Article IV (a) (i), IV (b), VII (a) and VII (b).

(g) The Working Committee shall have the accounts of the AICC audited annually by an auditor or auditors appointed by the AICC every year;

(h) The Working Committee shall fix the date by which the formation of Subordinate, District, Pradesh and All-India Congress Committees shall be completed;

(i) The Working Committee shall appoint a Board of Trustees for holding properties belonging to the All-India Congress Committee. The

(b) The Subjects Committee shall proceed to discuss the programme and shall frame resolutions for being moved in the Open Session. As far as possible, four hours shall be allotted for the consideration of propositions of which due notice has been given by the Pradesh Congress Committees or the members of the AICC.

Article XV: Plenary Congress Session

(a) A Session of the Congress shall ordinarily be held once in two years at the time and place decided upon by the AICC or the Working Committee.

(b) A Congress Session shall consist of the President of the Congress and all other delegates;

(c) (i) A Congress Session shall consider resolutions recommended to it for adoption by the Subjects Committee in the first instance;

(ii) Thereafter the Session shall take up any substantive motion not included in (i) above, but which 40 delegates have, before the commencement for the day's sittings, requested the President in writing to allow them to place before the Congress, provided, however, that no such motion shall be allowed unless it has been previously discussed at a meeting of the Subjects Committee, and received the support of at least a third of the members then present at the Subjects Committee meeting.

(d) The Pradesh Congress Committee, in whose jurisdiction the Congress Session is held, shall make such arrangements for holding the Congress Session as may be deemed necessary and, for the purpose, shall form a Reception Committee which shall work under its general guidance and which may include therein persons who are not its members;

(e) The Reception Committee shall elect its Chairman and other office-bearers from amongst its own members;

(f) The Reception Committee shall collect funds for the expenses of the Session and shall make all necessary arrangements for the reception and accommodation of delegates. It may also make necessary arrangements for the visitors;

(g) The receipts and disbursements of the Reception Committee shall be audited by an auditor or auditors, appointed by the Pradesh Congress Committee, and the Statement of Accounts together with the audit report shall be submitted by the Pradesh Congress Committee to the Working Committee within six months of the conclusion of the Congress Session. Any surplus funds remaining with the Reception Committee shall be divided equally between the AICC and the PCC.

Article XVI: Special Session

(a) A Special Session of the Congress shall be held in case the AICC so decides or if a majority of PCCs, through their resolutions, request the President of the Congress to convene such a Special Session.

(b) Such a Session shall be organised by the PCC of the Pradesh selected for holding the Session.

Article XVII: Election of the President

(a) The Working Committee shall appoint one of the General Secretaries of the AICC to work as Returning Officer for the election of the President;

Provided that no General Secretary, who is a candidate for Presidentship, shall be appointed, and that if all the General Secretaries are such candidates, the Working Committee shall appoint some one else to work as the Returning Officer.

(b) Any ten delegates may jointly propose the name of any delegate for election as President of the Congress. Such proposals must reach the Returning Officer on or before the date fixed by the Working Committee;

(c) The Returning Officer shall publish the names of all persons so proposed and it shall be open to any person whose name has been so proposed to withdraw his candidature within seven days of the proposed names by writing to the Returning Officer to that effect;

(d) After eliminating the names of those who have withdrawn, the Returning Officer shall immediately publish the names of the remaining candidates and circulate them to the Pradesh Congress Committees. If, after elimination, there remains only one candidate, he shall be declared duly elected as President of the next Congress Session;

(e) On a date fixed by the Working Committee, which shall not ordinarily be less than seven days after the final publication of the names of contesting candidates, each delegate shall be entitled to record, for the election of a President, his vote in the following manner: On the voting paper which shall exhibit the names of the candidates, the delegate shall, if there are only two candidates, record his vote for one of them. If there are more than two candidates, the delegate shall record at least two preferences by writing the figures 1, 2, etc., against the names of the candidates voted for. In such a case, he may give more than two preferences if he wishes to do so but any voting paper showing less than two preferences will be regarded as invalid. The voting paper shall be deposited in a ballot-box provided for the purpose;

term of the Board shall be for three years and the Treasurer of the All India Congress Committee shall be an ex-officio member of the Board;

(j) To meet any special situation, the Working Committee shall have the power to take such action in the interest of the Congress as it may deem fit; provided, however, that if any action is taken which is beyond the powers of the Working Committee as defined in this Constitution, it shall be submitted as early as possible to the AICC for ratification but not later than six months.

Article XIX: Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be in charge of the funds of the Congress and shall keep proper accounts of all investments, income and expenditure.

Article XX: General Secretaries

(a) Subject to general control of the President, the General Secretaries shall be in charge of the office of the AICC;

(b) The General Secretaries shall be responsible for the preparation and publication of a report of the proceedings of the Congress Session including its audited accounts, as soon as possible after the Session;

(c) The General Secretaries shall prepare a report of the work of the AICC and the Working Committee, including an audited statement of accounts for the period since the last submission of such a report and submit the same to the meeting of the AICC held at the beginning of each year and have it circulated to the members sufficiently in advance of the meeting.

Article XXI: Scrutiny of Membership

The Executives of the District Congress Committees and Pradesh Congress Committees shall arrange for periodical scrutiny and disposal of complaints regarding the enrolment of primary and active members in accordance with the rules prescribed by the Working Committee, but when complaints of a grave nature are reported to the Working Committee, it may enquire into such complaint and take such action as may be deemed necessary.

Article XXII: Election Disputes

The Executives of the District Congress Committees and Pradesh Congress Committees shall arrange for disposal of complaints regarding elections in accordance with the rules prescribed by the Working Committee, but when complaints of a grave nature are reported to the

Working Committee, it may enquire into such complaints and take such action as may be deemed necessary.

Article XXIII: Election Machinery

(a) The PCC or TCC as the case may be, shall within a period of two months from the beginning of its term, appoint by a majority of two-thirds of its members present and voting a Pradesh or Territorial Returning Officer.

(b) If any PCC or TCC fails to appoint a Pradesh or Territorial Returning Officer, the Working Committee shall appoint a Pradesh or Territorial Returning Officer.

(c) The Pradesh Returning Officer shall conduct all Congress elections in the Pradesh. He shall, in consultation with the Executive of the PCC or TCC and DCCs, appoint District Returning Officers and such other officers as may be necessary for the proper conduct of elections in the Pradesh or Territory. He shall also perform such other functions as are allotted to him by the Working Committee from time to time.

(d) The Pradesh Returning Officer shall hold office ordinarily for one term but he will continue to function till a new Pradesh Returning Officer is appointed or he is removed from office in accordance with the rules framed in this behalf by the Working Committee.

Article XXIV: Flag

The flag of the Indian National Congress shall consist of three horizontal colours, saffron, white and green, with the picture of a Charkha in blue in the centre. It shall be made of hand-spun and hand-woven Khadi.

Article XXV: (A) Parliamentary Board

The Working Committee shall set up a Parliamentary Board consisting of the Congress President and seven other members one of whom will be the leader of the Congress Party in Parliament, with the Congress President as the Chairman, for the purpose of regulating and co-ordinating the Parliamentary activities of the Legislature Congress Parties and shall frame rules in that behalf.

(B) Election Committees

(a) A Central Election Committee shall be set up consisting of members of the Parliamentary Board, and seven other members elected by the AICC for the purpose of:

(i) making the final selection of the candidates for the State and Central Legislature, and

(ii) conducting election campaigns.

(b) The Pradesh Election Committee shall consist of the President of the PCC, the Leader of the Congress Legislature Party and/or in case of Union Territories, the Leader of the Congress Party in the Territorial Council and not more than ten and not less than four other members, who shall be elected by the general meeting of the PCC or TCC. If the members of the Committee to be elected, other than the PCC or TCC President and the Leader of the Congress Legislature Party and/or in the case of Union Territories, Leader of the Congress Party in the Territorial Council, are elected by a two-third majority of members present and voting, they shall be declared elected. The voting for such an election shall be by ballot and on each ballot paper the voter shall have to record as many votes as there are members to be elected to the Committee. In case a two-third majority is not secured by each of the members to be elected, there shall be a fresh election by the system of single transferable vote.

The President of the PCC or TCC shall be ex-officio Chairman of Pradesh or Territorial Election Committee;

(c) The Pradesh or Territorial Election Committee, constituted in the above manner, shall recommend candidates for the Central and State Legislatures to the Central Election Committee;

(d) The Central Election Committee shall frame necessary rules to give guidance to the Pradesh Election Committees in regard to the selection of candidates and other matters relating to the conduct of elections.

Article XXVI: Vacancies

(a) The office of a delegate or a member of any Committee or Board constituted under this Constitution shall be vacated by resignation, removal or death;

(b) All vacancies shall, unless otherwise provided for, be filled in the same manner in which the vacated member was chosen and members so elected shall hold office for the unexpired term of the seat vacated;

(c) In the absence of any provision to the contrary, a Committee or Board, once it is properly constituted, shall not become invalid by reason of any vacancy on it.

Article XXVII: Miscellaneous

(a) No person shall be a member of any two parallel Committees;

(b) A Committee may delegate any of its powers to a smaller committee or an individual;

(c) Population figures of the last available census shall be the basis for all Congress purposes;

(d) Where there is a question of the value of fractions, a fraction of one-half or more shall be treated as one, and less than half as zero;

(e) Wherever, in this Constitution, the word "vote" or any of its inflections occurs, it means or refers to a valid vote.

(f) The District and Pradesh Congress Committees shall elect from amongst its members the Presidents, Vice-Presidents, and Treasurers and members of their Executive Committees and from amongst the members of the Executive Committees, the Presidents of the respective Committees shall appoint their secretaries.

(g) any question or dispute arising under the Constitution with regard to provisions, contents, interpretations or the procedures laid down therein, between members and between members and Committees or between Committees *inter se*, shall be determined by the appropriate authorities, indicated in this Constitution, and the decision of such an authority shall be final and binding on all members and Committees of the Indian National Congress, and shall not be liable to question by any of them in a court of law.

(h) Any member who does not attend three successive meetings of any Congress Committee without prior intimation of his absence shall cease to be a member of the Committee concerned.

Article XXVIII: Changes in the Constitution

This Constitution can be amended, altered, or added to only by a Session of the Congress. The AICC shall, however, have authority, except in regard to Article I, to amend, alter or add to the Constitution when the Congress is not in Session, if so desired by the Working Committee, provided that no such addition, alteration or amendment shall be made by the AICC except by a majority of two-thirds of the members present and voting at a meeting held specially for this purpose after due notice of the proposed changes has been given to each member at least one month prior to the date of such a meeting. The changes made by the AICC shall be placed before the next Session of the Congress for ratification but they may come into operation even before ratification from such date as may be prescribed by the AICC.